

BREAKING

MADISON SCHOOLS


Hearing officer finds 'no just cause' for discipline of teacher who used the N-word

Chris Rickert | Wisconsin State Journal , Logan Wroge | Wisconsin State Journal

Jan 8, 2020

An independent hearing officer has recommended that the Madison School District rescind its discipline of a teacher who last year violated the district's informal policy against staff use of the N-word, saying in a 28-page decision that there was "no just cause" for the teacher's disciplinary suspension.

Sandra Rivera, a bilingual social worker at the district's dual-language immersion charter school, Nuestro Mundo Elementary, said in October that she was disciplined after she used the word to make a point during a staff meeting in March.

Rivera, who in October identified herself as a "black Puerto Rican,"  said that during a meeting on professional development activities to further the district's black excellence goal, "I brought up how to prepare ourselves better as staff members to address issues where students use racial slurs and insults."

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Social worker ensnared by School District's zero-tolerance policy on N-word speaks out

Chris Rickert | Wisconsin State Journal

She said another person at the meeting was surprised to hear that students used such language, so “I gave her a recent example I had witnessed, and wanting to be clear, I quoted the student and said the N-word, out loud and in its entirety.”

In his Dec. 17 decision, hearing officer Dennis McGilligan recognized that Rivera’s “use of the N word ... was to discourage its use.”

“(Rivera’s) expression of the word was in the context of pushing for the District’s black excellence and anti-racism efforts and specifically to initiate a discussion among educators about what professional development could be offered to move that work forward in their school,” he wrote.

“She asked what could be done as staff ‘to better prepare ourselves to respond to situations when a student uses the word to insult another student,’” McGilligan wrote. “She quoted an example of hate speech used by a student (stating the N-word in its entirety) to demonstrate the need to address hate speech at Nuestro Mundo; a need that was not being addressed sufficiently.”



After reinstatement, Madison School District reiterates use of racial slurs by staff is not tolerated

Logan Wroge | Wisconsin State Journal

In a statement Tuesday, Doug Keillor, executive director of Madison Teachers Inc., the union representing Rivera in her grievance against the district, said “it is our hope and expectation that the district will honor this most recent decision and continue to

move away from its zero-tolerance practice to one that involves a more restorative approach.”

“MTI and its members are committed to work with the district and the community in this difficult but critical work,” he said. “We hope that this decision will be a step toward making this a reality.”

A spokesman for the district did not respond to a request for comment. According to McGilligan, the district argued it was common sense not to use the word in a school setting, and the district had communicated that position to staff.

McGilligan is recommending the district rescind its disciplinary suspension — the most severe form of discipline before termination — taken against Rivera. It did not involve any time off from work or loss of pay.

BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT HEARING OFFICER

In the Matter of the
Grievance of

SANDRA RIVERA (MADISON TEACHERS INC.)

Under the Grievance Procedure of

WERC # A/P M-19-009
Sandra Rivera Suspension

MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Appearances:

Attorneys Tamara B. Packard and Beauregard William Patterson, Pines Bach, LLP, 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 900, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, appearing on behalf of Sandra Rivera.

Attorney Heidi S. Tepp, Director of Labor Relations, Human Resources, Madison Metropolitan School District, 545 West Dayton Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, appearing on behalf of the Madison Metropolitan School District.

DECISION OF THE INDEPENDENT HEARING OFFICER

By email dated June 13, 2019 the undersigned was informed that he had been selected as Independent Hearing Officer ("IHO") by the parties from a panel submitted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission ("WERC").

A Step Three grievance hearing was conducted by the undersigned on September 16, 2019. There are no procedural issues. A stenographic transcript of the hearing was made. Thereafter, the parties filed briefs and reply briefs completing their briefing schedule on November 12, 2019. After consideration of the entire record and the arguments made by the parties, the Independent Hearing Officer issues the following Decision.

STIPULATED ISSUE

1. Did the District have just cause to discipline Sandra Rivera by issuing her a disciplinary suspension?
2. If not, what is the appropriate remedy?

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

General Background

This is a grievance under the Madison Metropolitan School District's ("District" or "MMSD") Employee Handbook concerning the disciplinary suspension of Sandra Rivera, a

Warning on slurs

The zero-tolerance stance on use of racial slurs, implemented last school year by the district's former superintendent, Jennifer Cheatham, makes the use of slurs a one-strike-and-you're-out offense if uttered in front of students.

The policy, which was not formally adopted by the School Board, applies regardless of whether the slurs were directed at students or used in a derogatory manner.

Prior to Rivera's use of the N-word in March, staff at Nuestro Mundo had received two emails from Cheatham and one message from the school principal, Joshua Forehand, regarding the use of racial slurs, according to McGilligan's decision.

But McGilligan wrote the messages left several staffers at Nuestro Mundo unaware the district was putting a blanket ban on the use of slurs in any context. Rather, he wrote, they believed the messages were reinforcing the point such words should never be directed at a student.

In a November 2018 email to all district staff, Cheatham referenced an "incident that recently occurred in one of our schools in which a staff member used a racial slur directed toward a student," saying it "demands our attention, our reflection, and our insistence that we do better as a community."

Forehand then sent a message to Nuestro Mundo staff in January 2019 regarding two other incidents in the district when the N-word was used in front of students, saying "there is no scenario in which the use of this word would be appropriate at our school, nor would it be tolerated."

In another email to district staff last February, Cheatham said: "No matter the context or circumstance, the use of racial slurs or hate language aimed at a person's protected class status is unacceptable in (the district)."

While the district contended its position was clear, McGilligan wrote it is reasonable to conclude the district's expectations on the use of the N-word "were not clearly communicated."

“Two different interpretations of the communications reasonably could be, and were, drawn about what was expected from staff regarding use of the N-word,” he wrote.

A few weeks after Rivera used the N-word, more than 30 staffers at Nuestro Mundo sent an email to Cheatham and the district’s head of human resources extolling Rivera’s commitment to social justice and advocating for “restorative” action instead of discipline, according to McGilligan’s decision.

“We do not condone the use of racial slurs at our school,” the message said. “Also, we strongly encourage administration to consider the context in which the word was uttered.”

Other instances

It’s not clear how many district staffers were fired or forced out of their positions last school year for violating the informal zero-tolerance policy. The district has confirmed seven, all of whom were white.

While the district has been guarded about the details of previous incidents, the Oct. 16 firing of a black West High School security guard for using the N-word in front of a student thrust the district into an international spotlight, with many arguing that context matters.



'I'm back': Fired Madison West High School security guard receives job back

Logan Wroge | Wisconsin State Journal

The security guard, Marlon Anderson, had been helping with a disruptive male student, who is also black, when the student repeatedly called him the N-word and other obscenities. In response, Anderson said he told the male student several times not to use the slur, including a phrase like “do not call me a N-word,” using the actual word.

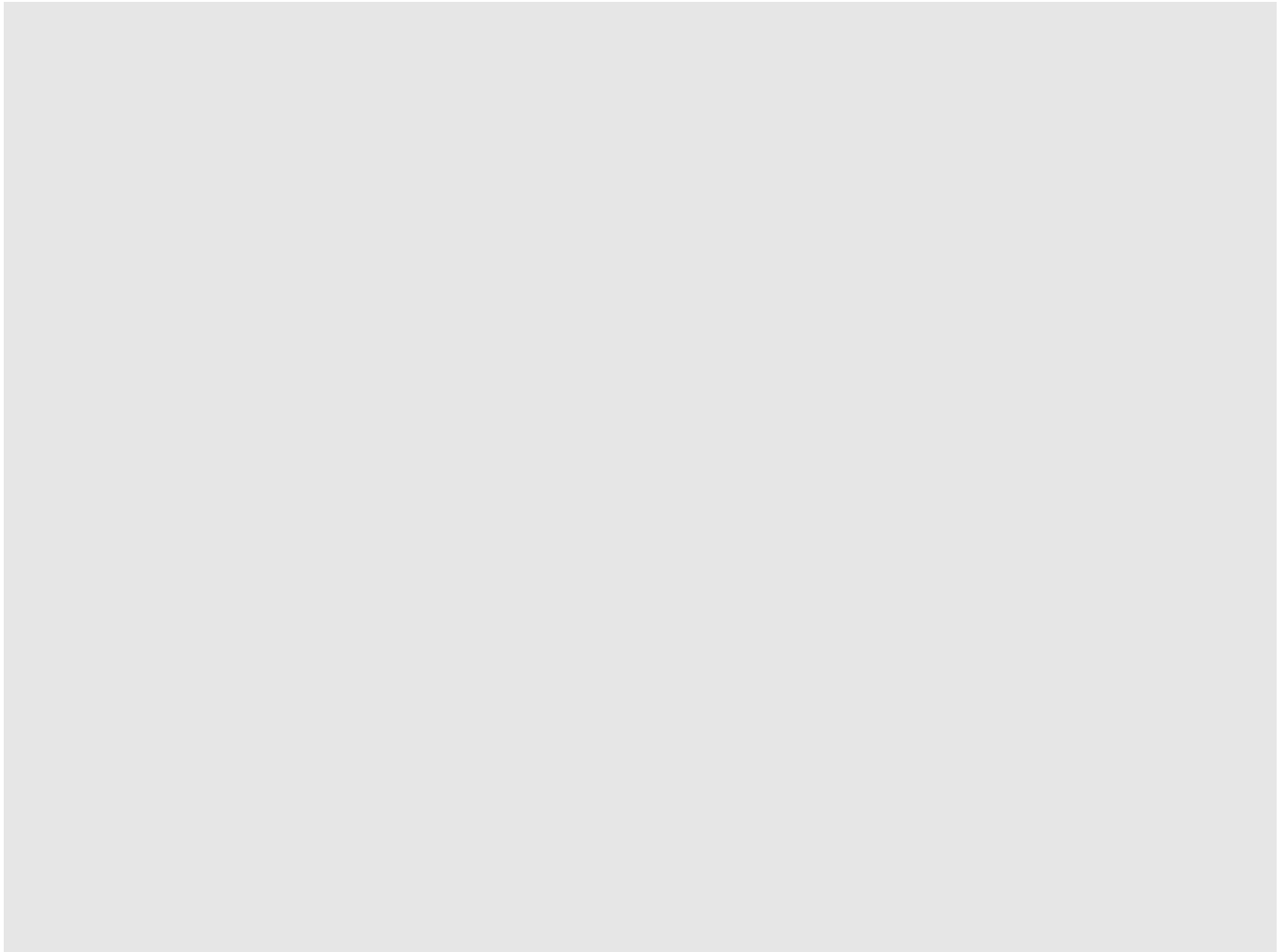
McGilligan wrote the union argued Rivera was not alone in her confusion on the zero-tolerance approach to slurs, citing Anderson's case as a "failure to enunciate clear expectations district-wide."

Interim superintendent Jane Belmore rescinded Anderson's termination after widespread community outrage, including a walkout from West High and a march to district offices to protest the firing that included some 1,500 students, staff and community members.

Photos: Explore the story behind how every Madison school got its name

Explore the story behind how every Madison school got its name

ALLIS ELEMENTARY



Who or what named for: The school was built in 1916 on land donated by the widow of Frank Allis, who was the son of the founder of the Allis-Chalmers farm machinery company in Milwaukee. Frank Allis also was described as a "gentleman farmer" in Blooming Grove who built a large, lakeside manor house in 1888 at 4123 Monona Drive known as San Damiano, a 10-acre parcel that remains the largest undeveloped private lot on the lake. It was donated in 1928 to a religious order, the Norbertines of Saint Norbert Abbey in De Pere, who still own it.

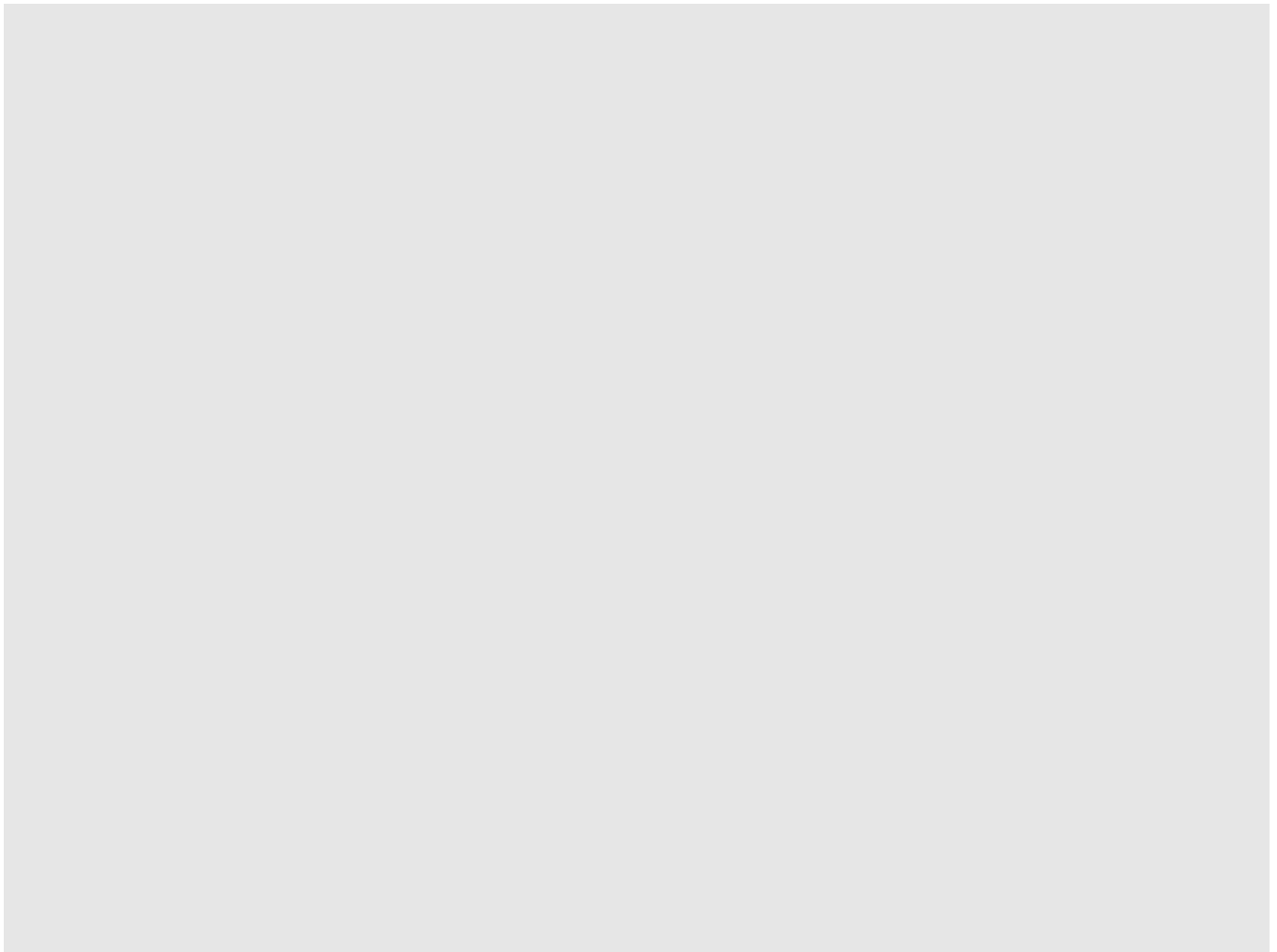
Location: 4201 Buckeye Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, a new hydration station at Allis Elementary, one of several installed at six Madison schools this year as part of the 'Got Water?' campaign from Madison Water Utility and the Madison School District.

Madison Water Utility

BADGER ROCK MIDDLE



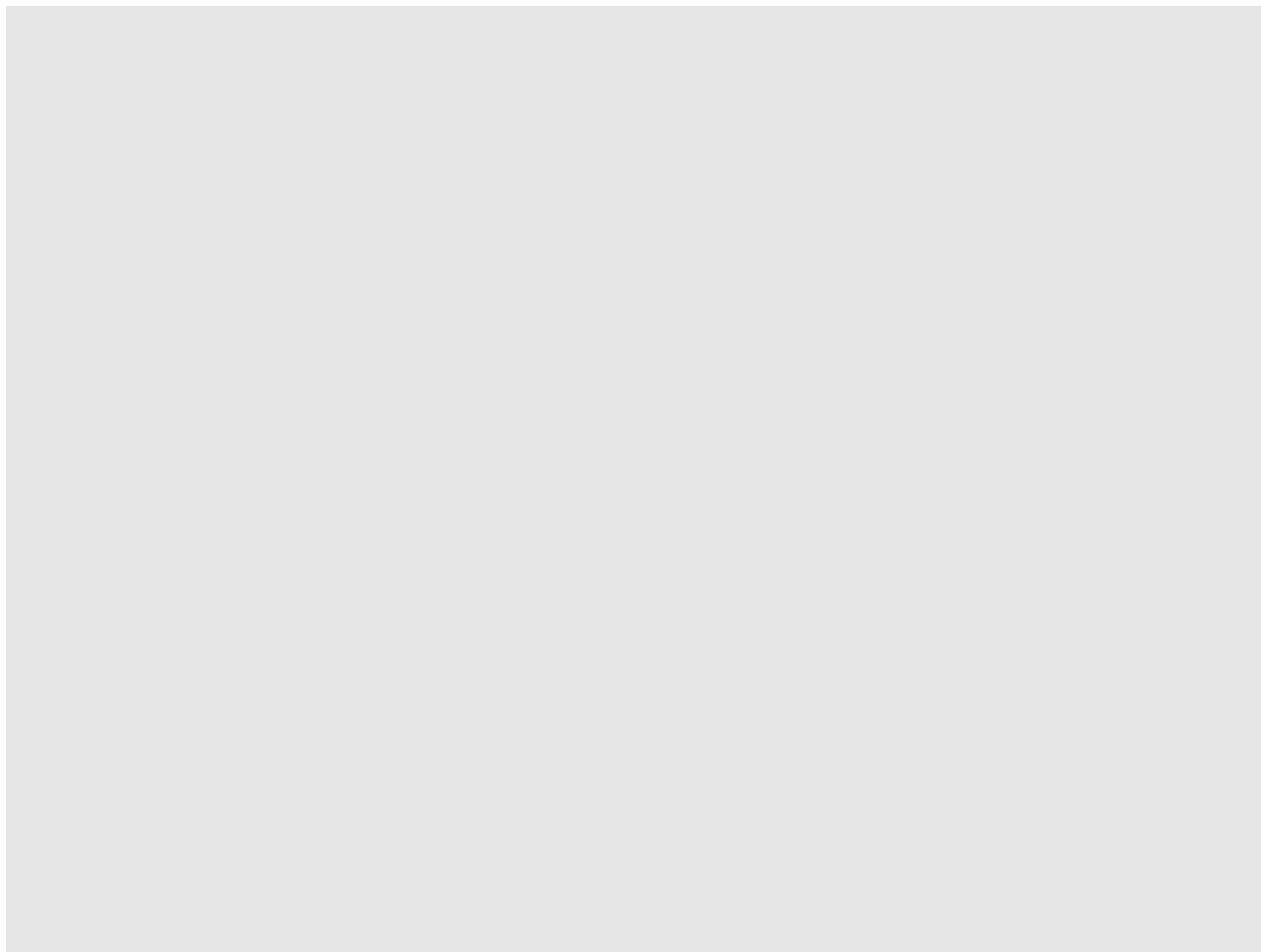
Who or what named for: An in-district charter school with an interdisciplinary, project-based learning system, Badger Rock was named for the street it's on, staff said.

Location: 501 E. Badger Road

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, the greenhouse at Badger Rock Middle School in December 2016.

BLACK HAWK MIDDLE



Who or what named for: Black Hawk (1767-1838) was a band leader and warrior of the Sauk American Indian tribe. Through an interpreter, Black Hawk also published the first Native American autobiography in 1833.

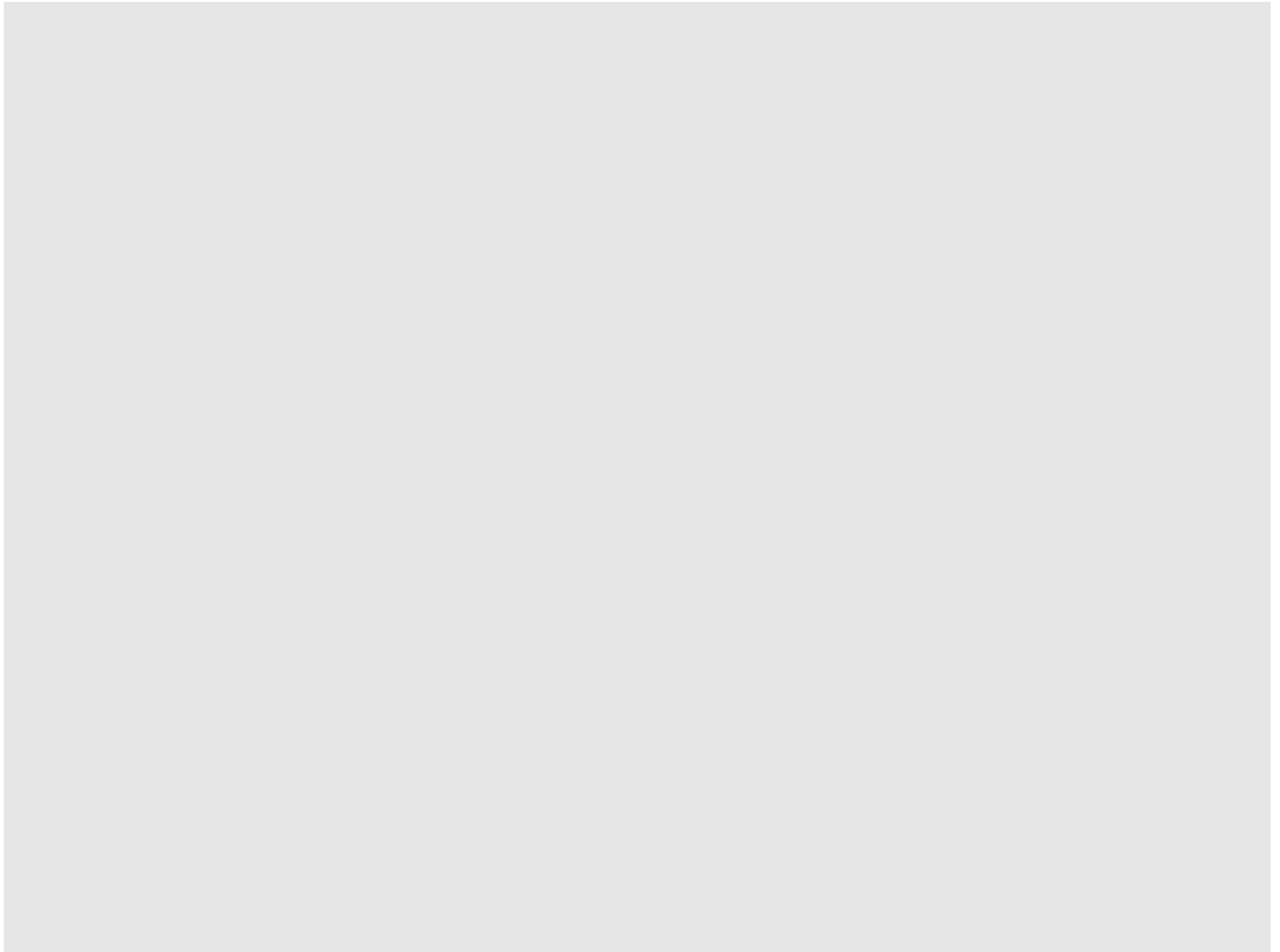
Location: 1402 Wyoming Way

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, eighth-grader Bridget Fair places a sign on a student's locker for the "Be Someone's Reason To Smile" campaign at the school in December 2017. The students put up about 420 signs on students' lockers in a bid to fight bullying with positive actions.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

CHAVEZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Cesar Chavez (March 31, 1927 – April 23, 1993) was a Mexican American labor leader and civil rights activist who co-founded the National Farm Workers Association.

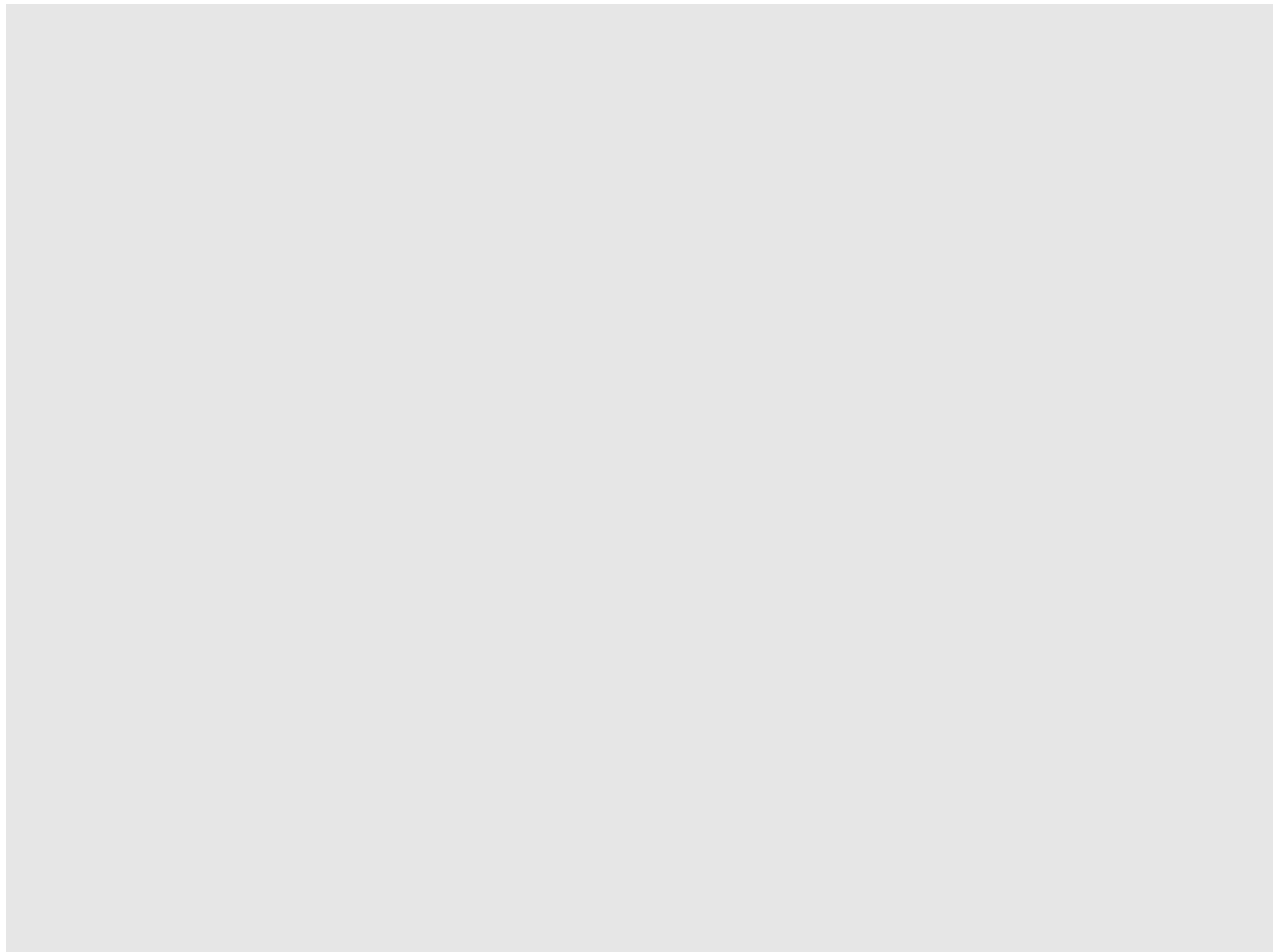
Location: 3502 Maple Grove Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, members of Opera for the Young perform "Cinderella" at Chavez Elementary School in fall 2012.

MIKE DEVRIES

CHEROKEE HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is part of the Summit Woods neighborhood, which is replete with Native American street and place names. The Cherokee Indians were one of the largest of five Native American tribes that settled in the American Southeast. Of Iroquoian descent, the tribe originally were from the Great Lakes region.

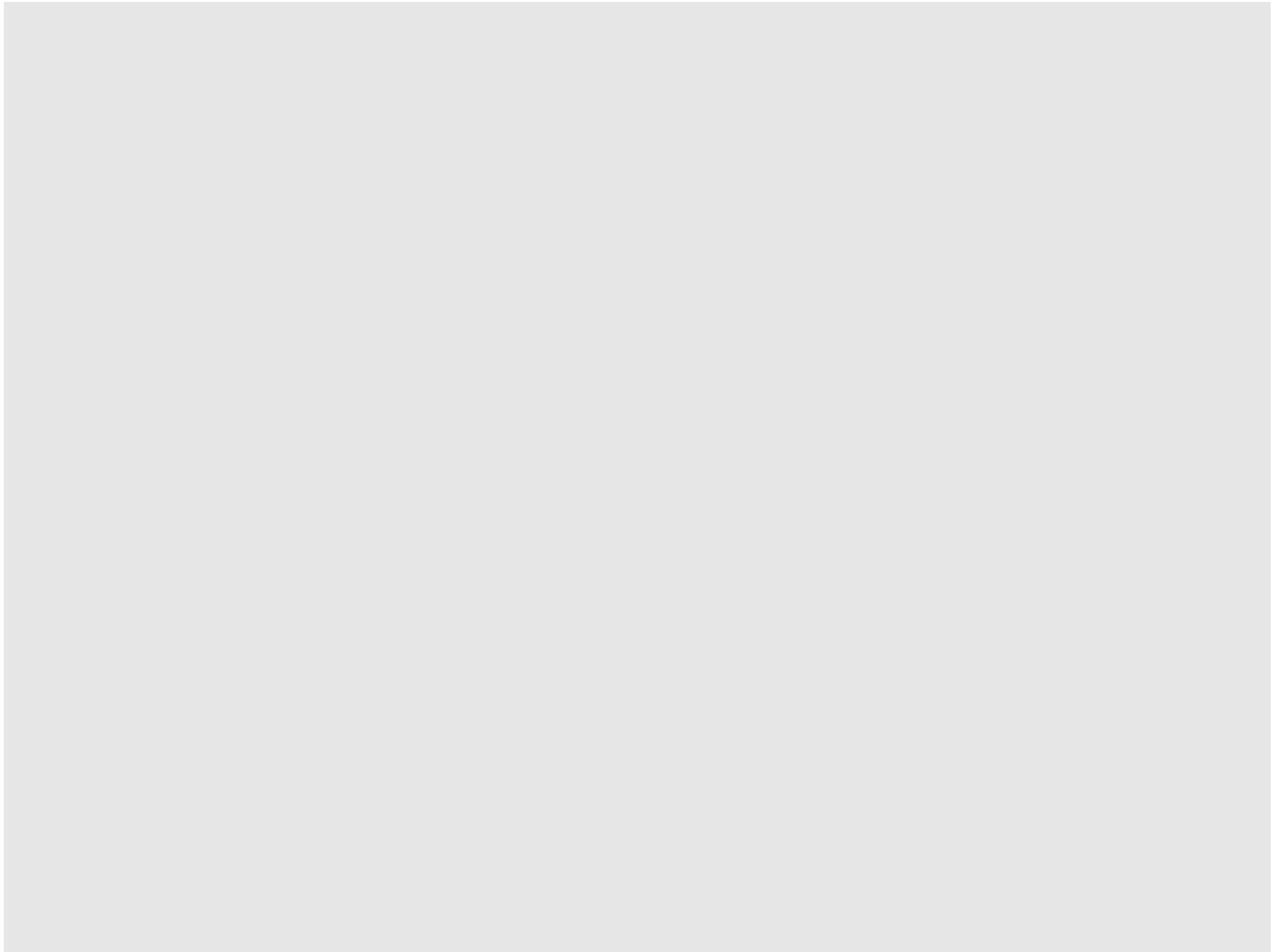
Location: 4301 Cherokee Drive

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, parents, community members and teachers greet students on their first day of school at Cherokee Heights Middle School on September 2, 2016.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Originally known as Highlands-Mendota Beach School, Crestwood sits on the north side of Old Sauk Road, which also is the northern boundary of a 177-home residential development known as Crestwood, the neighborhood name chosen by the Wisconsin Cooperative Housing Association in 1936.

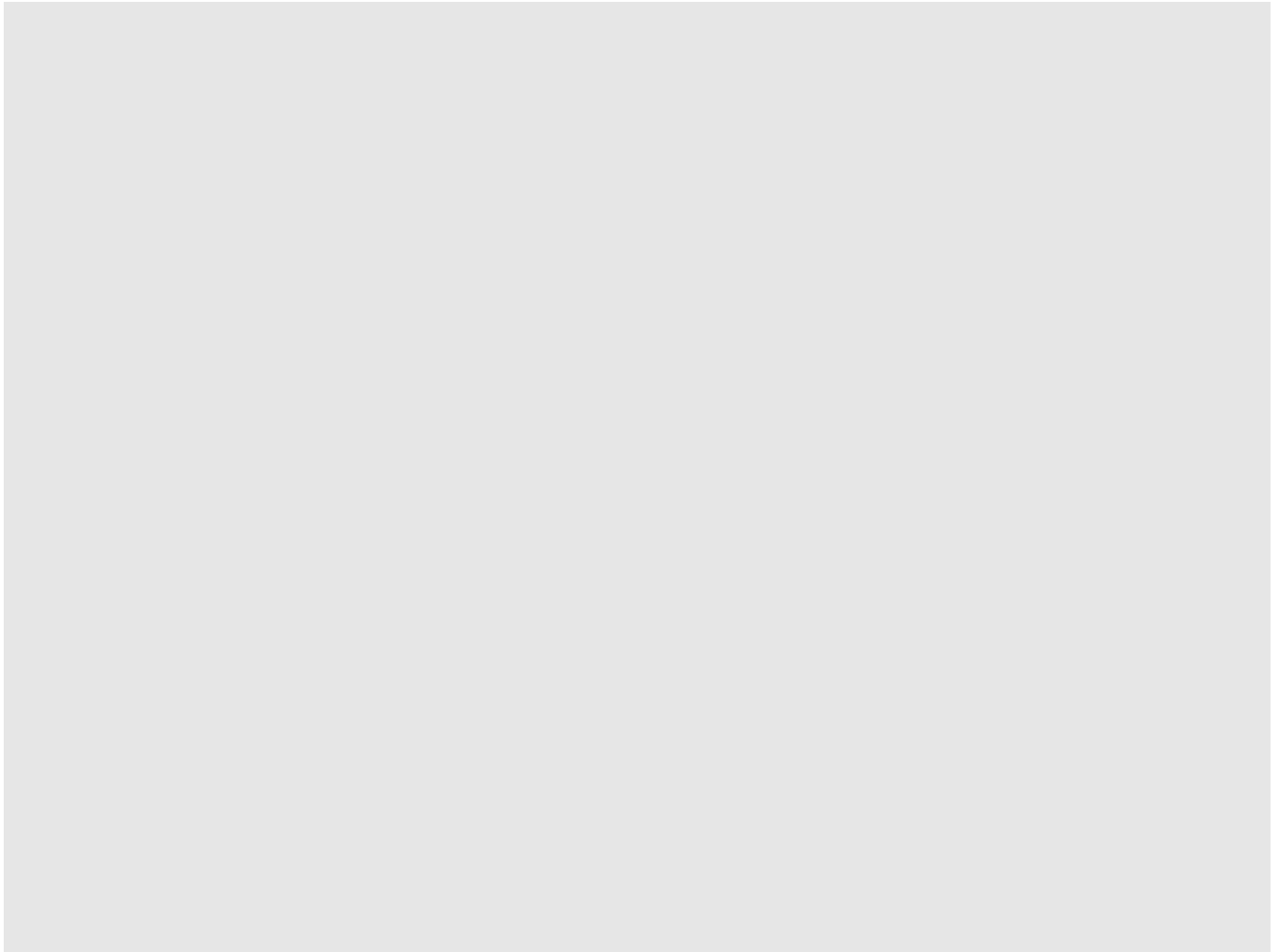
Location: 5930 Old Sauk Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above is an exterior of the school.

MADISON SCHOOL DISTRICT

EAST HIGH SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Reference to the school's location in the city.

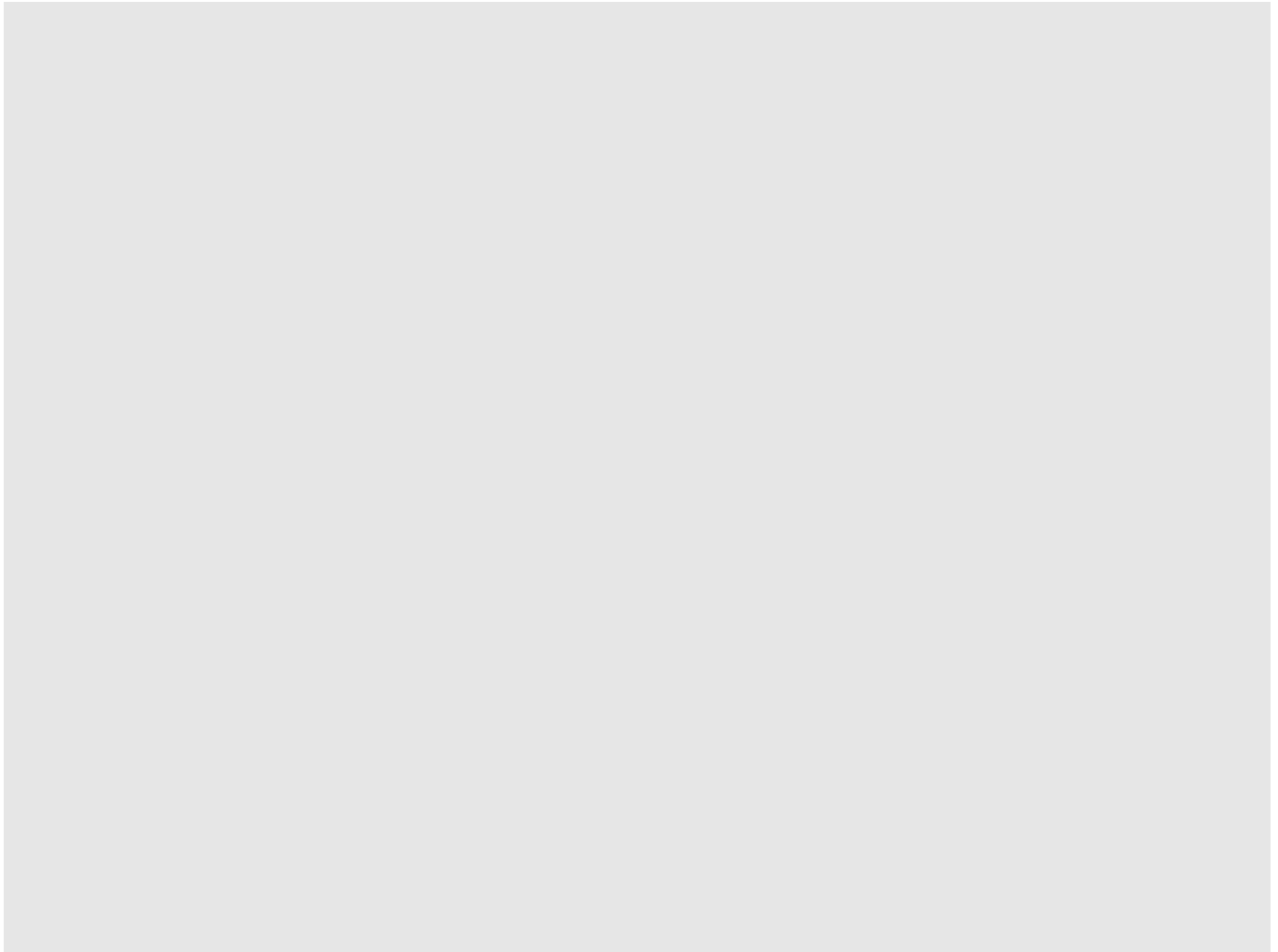
Location: 2222 E. Washington Ave.

Grades: 9-12

Pictured above, East High principal Mike Hernandez points out improvements in sound, lighting, seating and technical systems in the school's theater as part of a \$4.7 million renovation nearing completion in July 2017. Behind Hernandez is the redesigned stage, with its new, polished-wood arch. Wood panels, known as wave clouds, on the ceiling were installed to provide better sound quality.

M.P. KING, STATE JOURNAL

ELVEHJEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Born in McFarland, Conrad E. Elvehjem (May 17, 1901 -- July 27, 1962) was a renowned American biochemist who identified vitamin B3. He spent nearly his entire academic career at UW-Madison, serving as university president from 1958-1962.

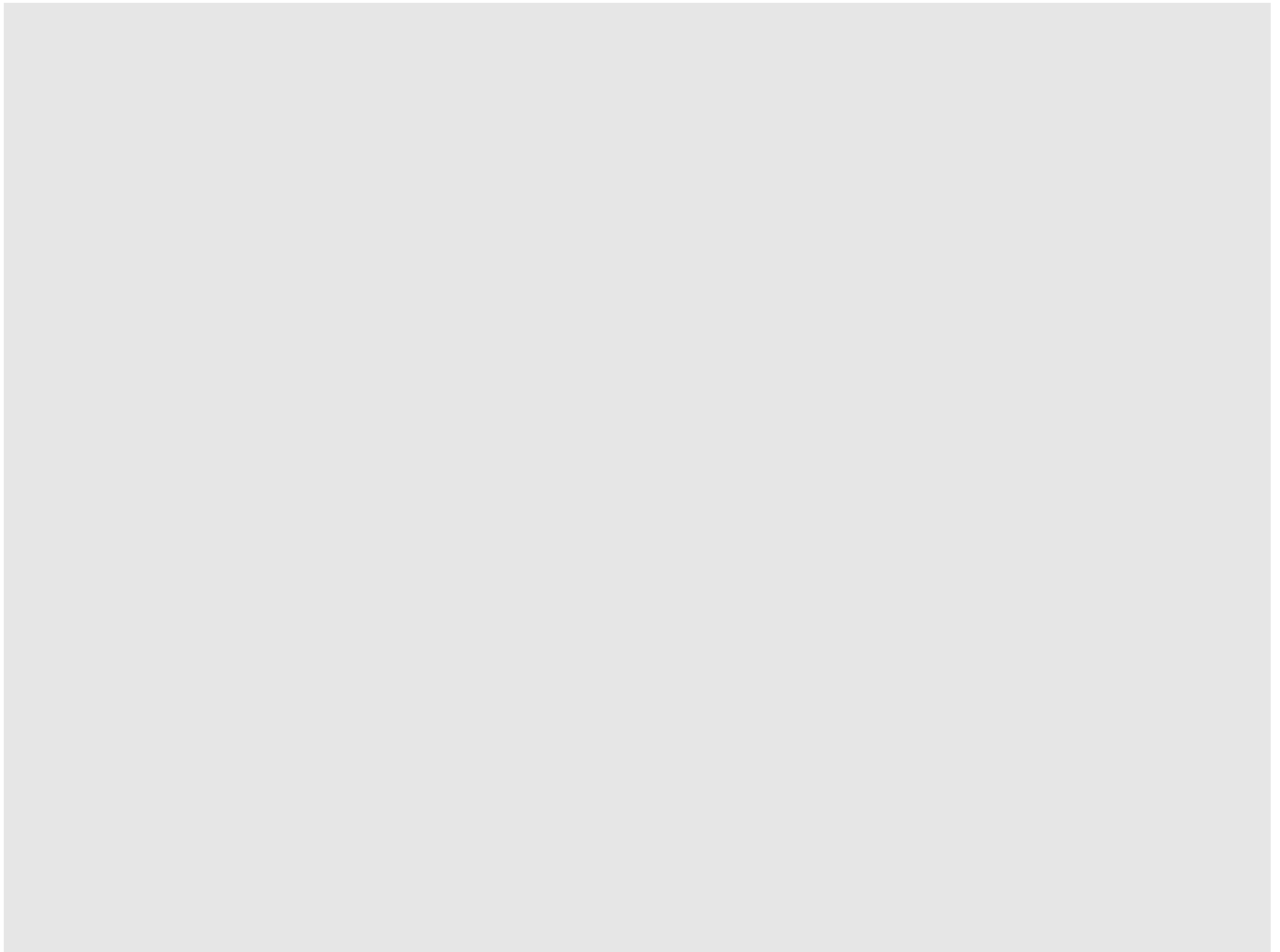
Location: 5106 Academy Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Rachel Leikness, 8, in August 2016 enjoys the boundless playground at Elvehjem Elementary School, which was the first such certified playground in the state when it opened in 2008. "The playground has been used in ways that we never envisioned," said Kelli Betsinger, an Elvehjem resident who helped raise money for the project so her son, who has cerebral palsy, could play with other children. One unanticipated use: grandparents joining their grandchildren atop the playground.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

EMERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Ralph Waldo Emerson, (1803-1882) an American poet, essayist, philosopher and lecturer who led the transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was a champion of individualism.

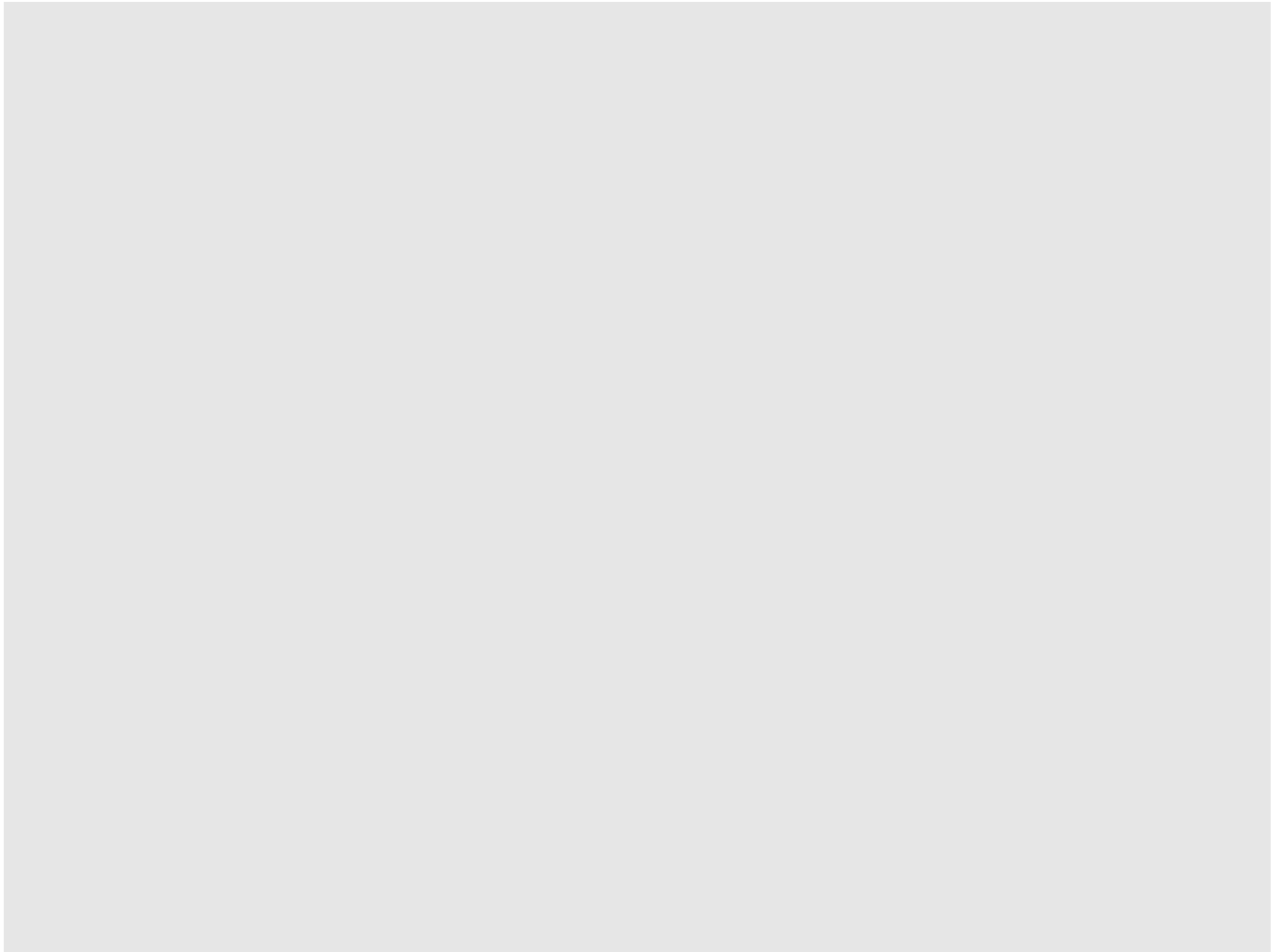
Location: 2429 E. Johnson St.

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, an Emerson Elementary class listens to a radio broadcast in 1931.

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY IMAGE 18402

FALK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Philip H. Falk (1898-1986) served as the Madison Superintendent of Schools from 1939-1963.

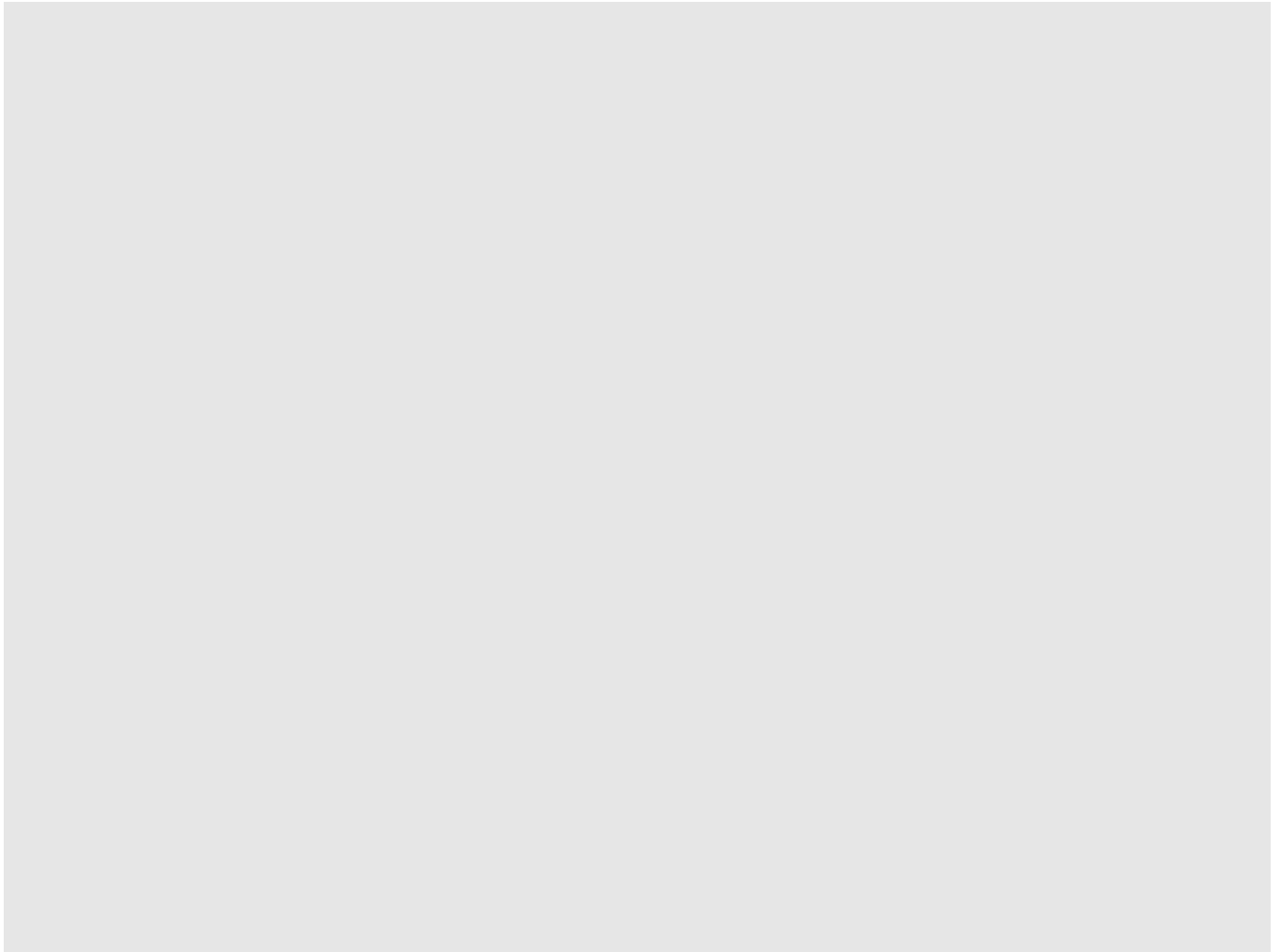
Location: 6323 Woodington Way

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Nathan Prieser, left, and Molly McKay play together in their 4K classroom at Falk, on Madison's Southwest Side in October. The 4K program uses three-hour classes incorporating play and other elements to help 4-year-olds start getting ready for full-time school and to improve their social, emotional and academic skills.

AMBER ARNOLD, STATE JOURNAL

FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Ben Franklin (1705-1790) was one of the nation's Founding Fathers, as well as an author, printer, postmaster, inventor, diplomat and eventual abolitionist. From 1785 to 1788, he also served as governor of Pennsylvania.

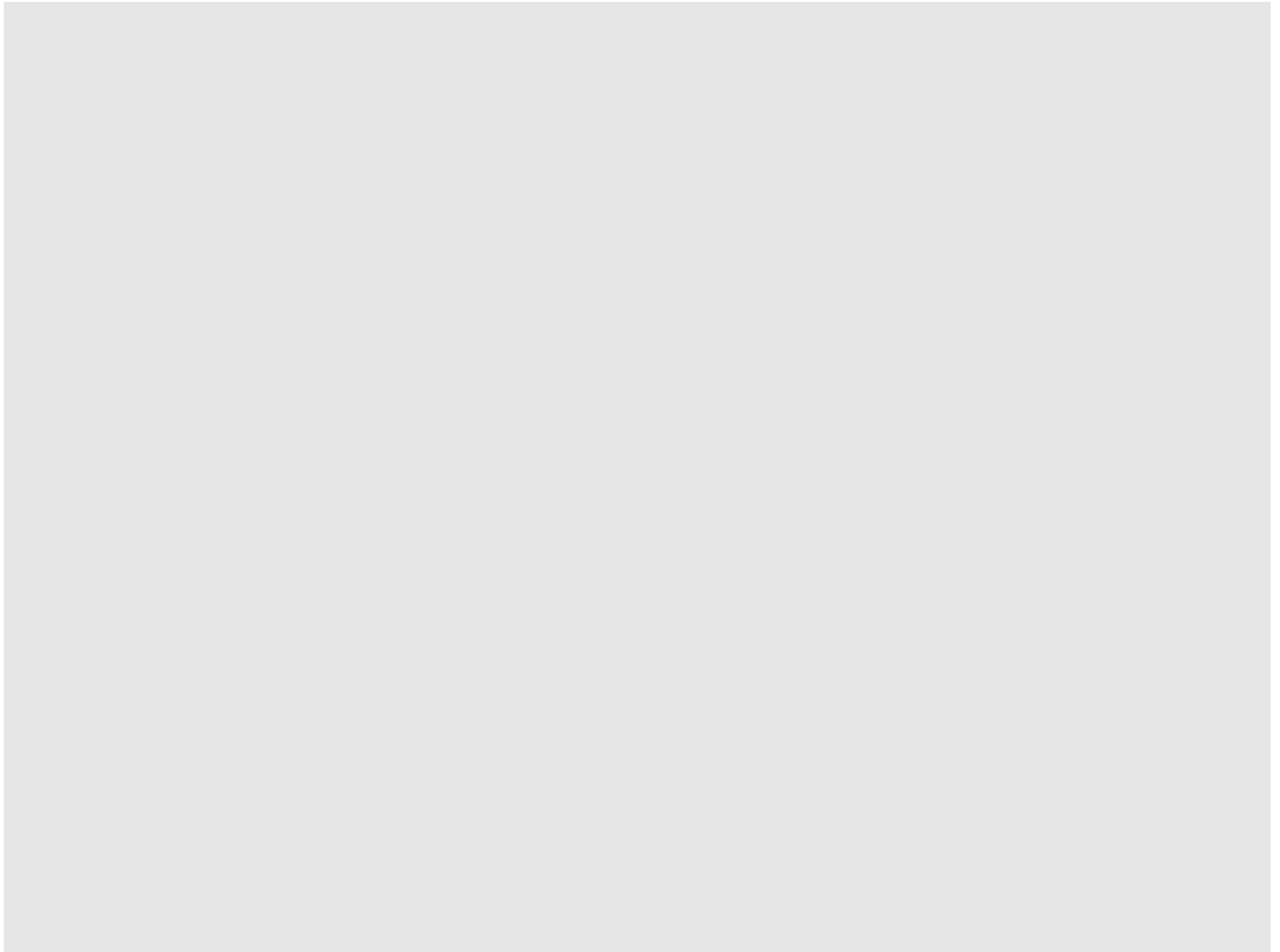
Location: 305 W. Lakeside St.

Grades: K4-2

Pictured above, the school's playground area in May 2017.

MICHELLE STOCKER, THE CAPITAL TIMES

GLENDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is located within the boundaries of the Glendale neighborhood in southeast Madison.

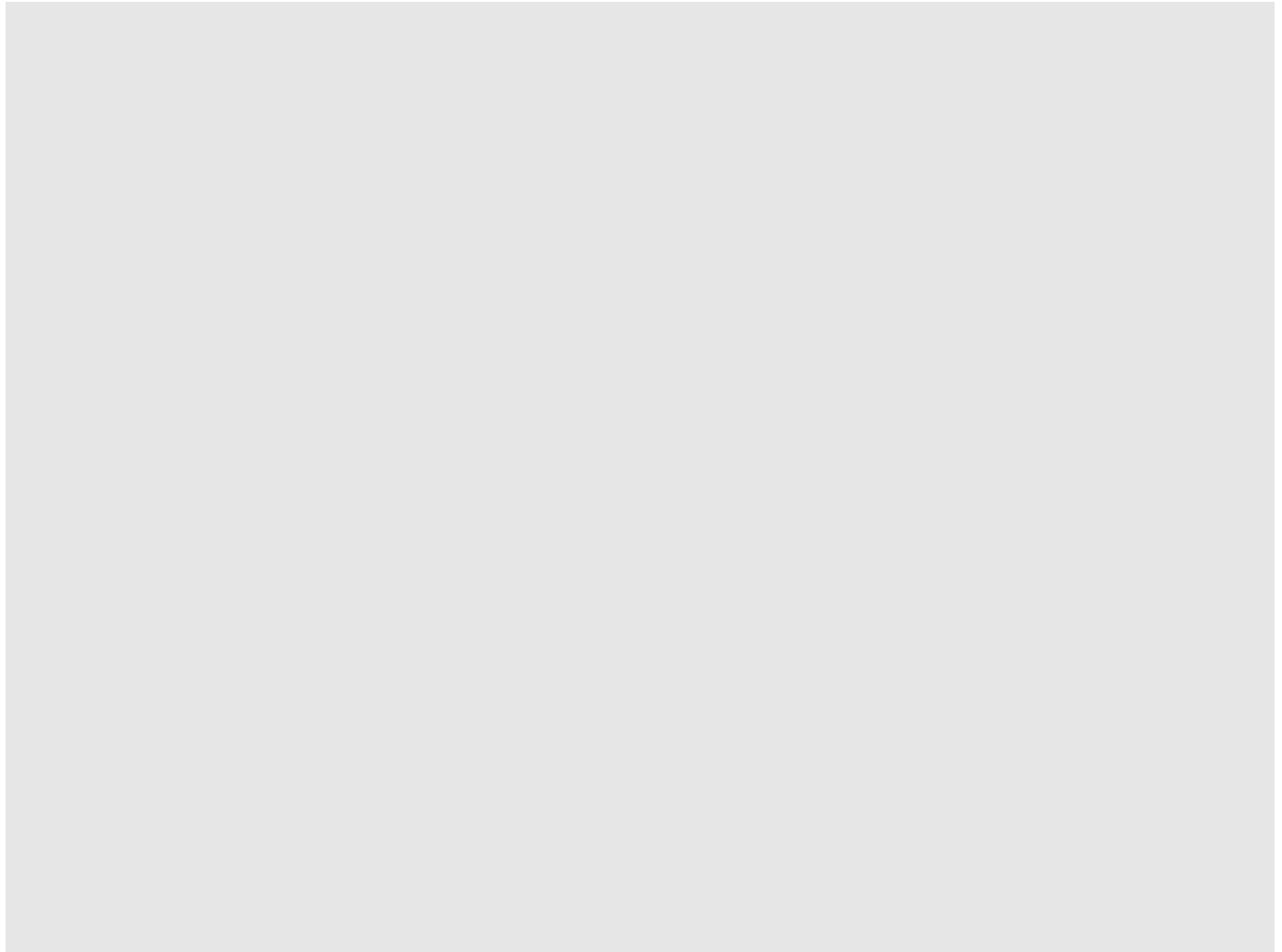
Location: 1201 Tompkins Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, fourth-graders Sofia Rupnow, left, and Rosa Aleman make wallets from duct tape during a recess craft day at Glendale Elementary in February 2016.

ANDY MANIS -- For the State Journal

GOMPERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Samuel Gompers (January 27, 1850 – December 13, 1924) was an English-born American labor leader and key figure in American labor history, based in New York.

As the first and longest-serving president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), he led a nationwide strike in 1886 for an eight-hour workday, among other actions in a career that helped the labor movement win a permanent -- if now weakened -- place in American society.

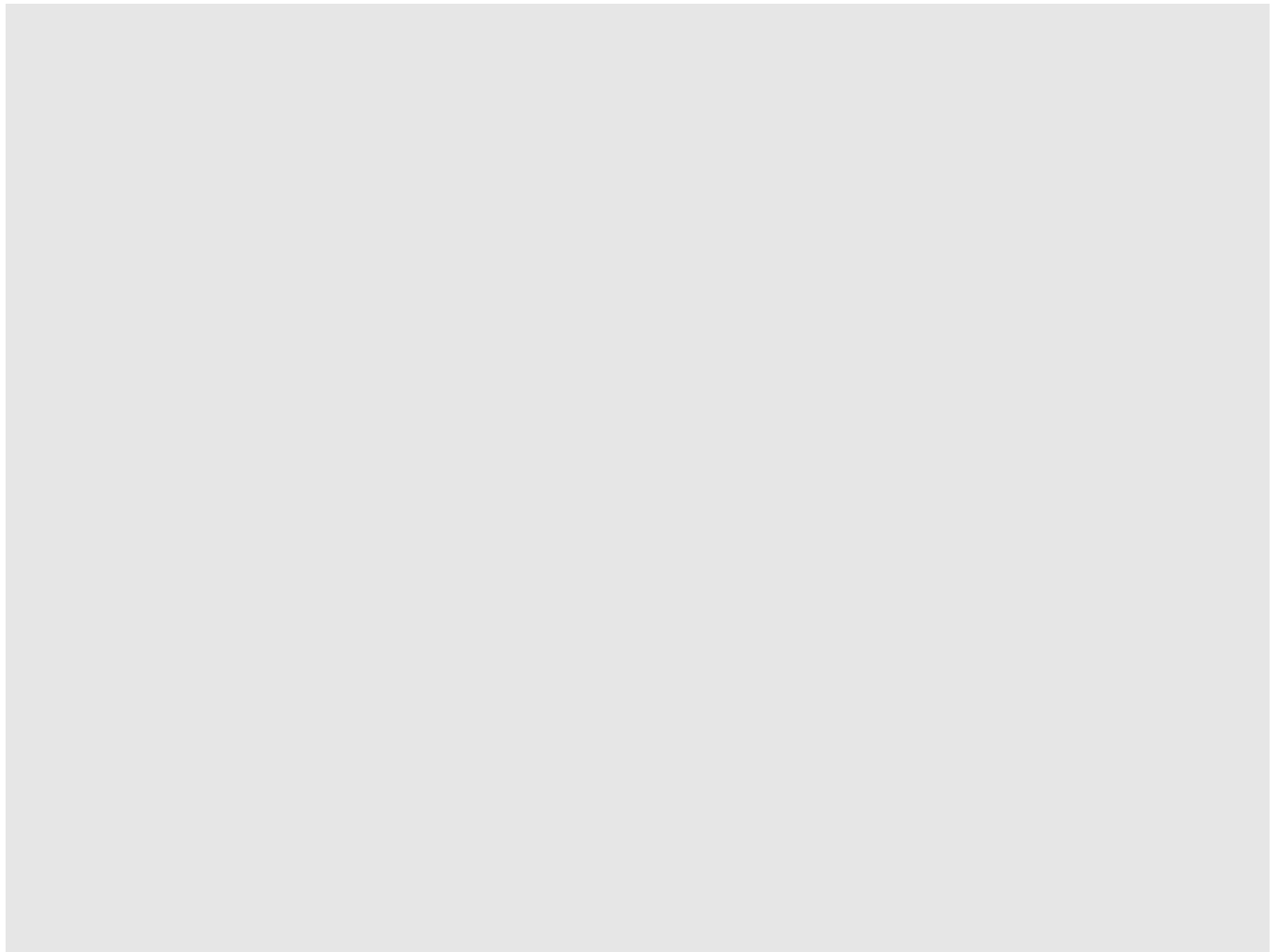
Location: 1502 Wyoming Way

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, the school's art room in October 2015.

MICHELLE STOCKER, CAPITAL TIMES

HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: In 1993, the Madison School District renamed the former Van Hise Middle School for Velma Hamilton, a trailblazer in Madison's civil rights and education communities who helped found the Madison chapter of the NAACP and was remembered as a tireless advocate for children and the black community at the time of her death in July 2009 at age 99.

Hamilton was dean of liberal studies at Madison Area Technical College, where she was hired in 1950 as the college's first black teacher when it was known as Madison Vocational School. She was personally active on issues including fair housing, an end to red-lining and the hiring of more black teachers in the schools.

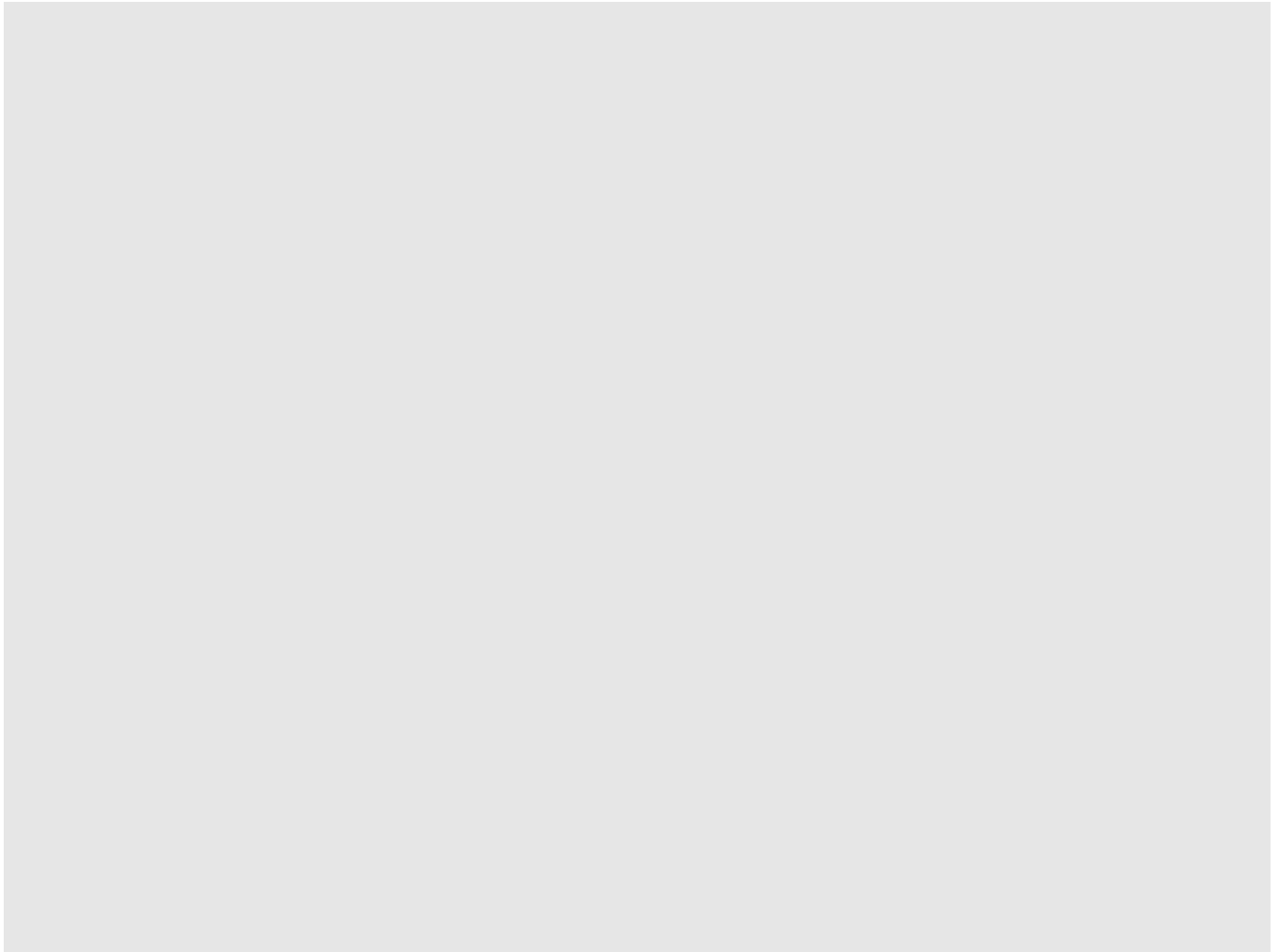
Location: 4801 Waukesha St.

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, Hamilton assistant principal Mike Brown peruses items retrieved from a 1957 time capsule that had been recently unearthed by construction crews working on an expansion of the school in December 2015.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

HAWTHORNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Nathaniel Hawthorne, (July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) an American novelist best known for writing *The Scarlett Letter*, published in 1850.

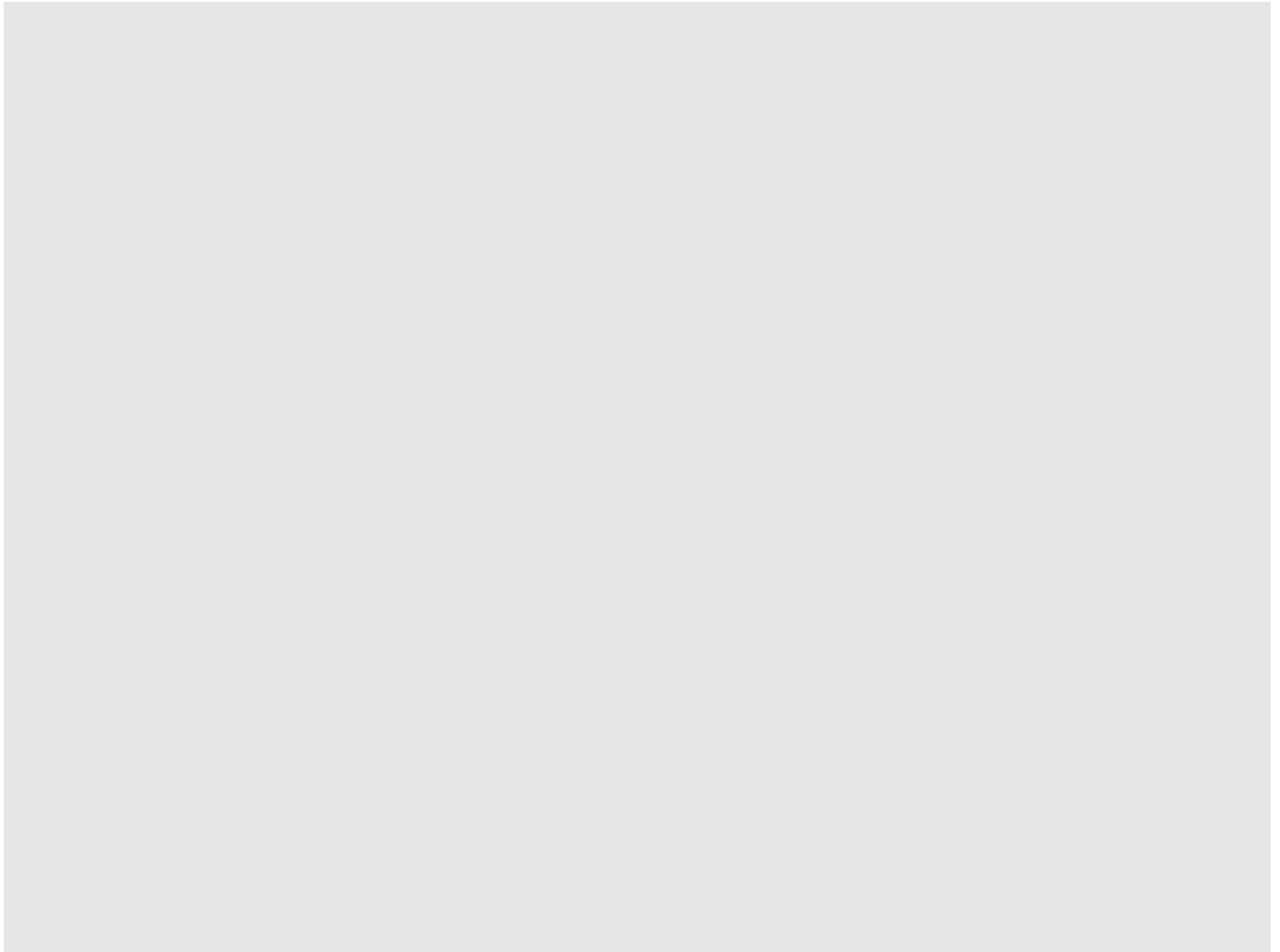
Location: 3344 Concord Ave.

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Jill Skeans, a positive behavior support coach at the school, gives K'won Watson a hug as he visits her office on March 31, 2017. K'won had done well that day on his "Daily Dolphin Report," a relationship-building tool that encourages good behavior. Unbeknownst to them both, the day would be K'won's last at the school.

AMBER ARNOLD -- State Journal

HUEGEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Dr. Ray W. Huegel (1890-1969) was a dentist and member of the Madison School Board from 1934 to 1968.

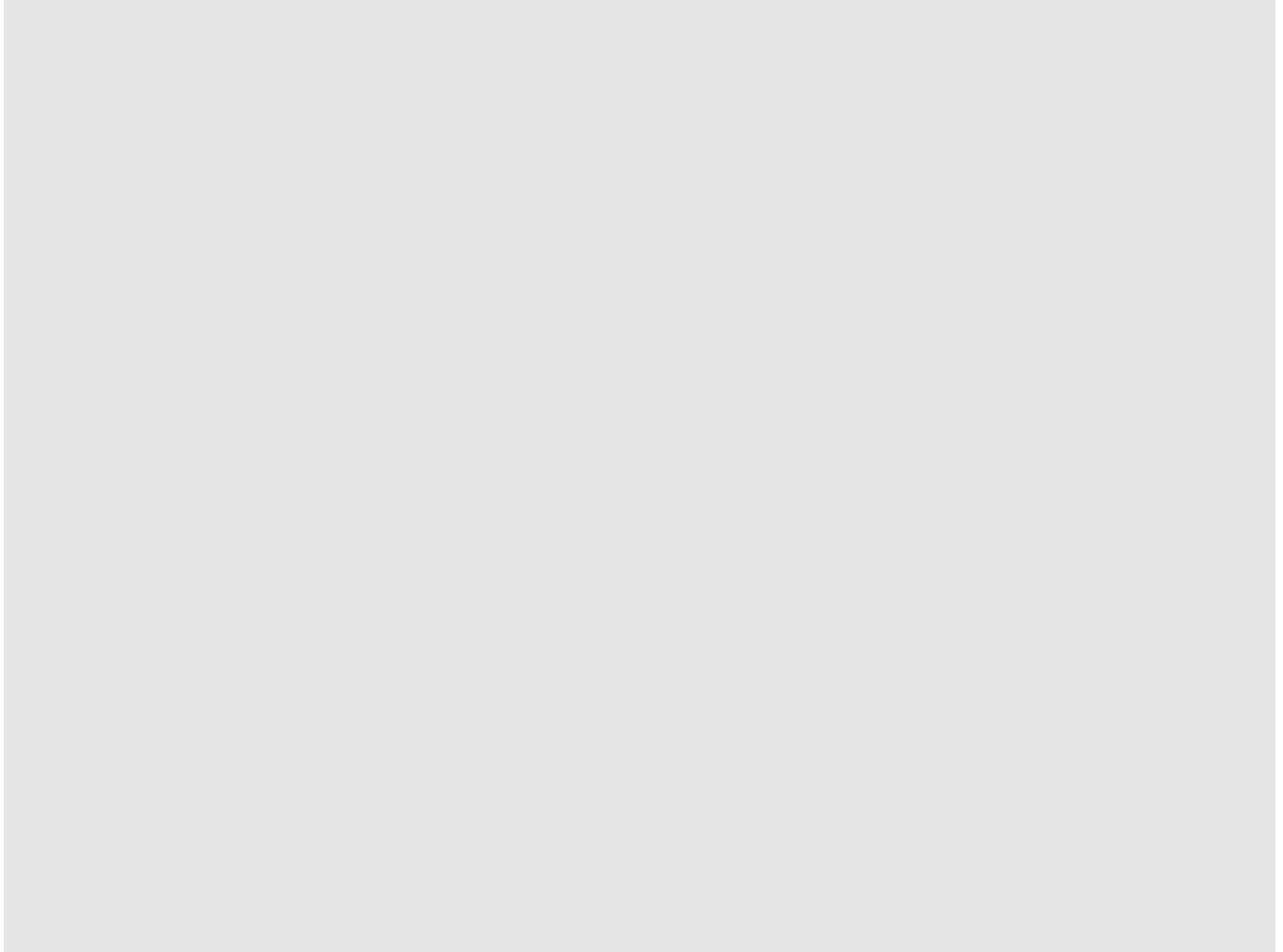
Location: 2601 Prairie Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Julia Cedergren, right, a Memorial High School sophomore, helps first-grader Jayda Jones in April in an art class at the elementary school during SPIRIT Day, an annual day of volunteerism by Memorial students.

AMBER ARNOLD, STATE JOURNAL

JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Thomas Jefferson (April 13, 1743 – July 4, 1826) was an American Founding Father and principal author of the Declaration of Independence who later served as the nation's third president, from 1801 to 1809. He was a proponent of individual rights and worked primarily as a planter, lawyer and politician.

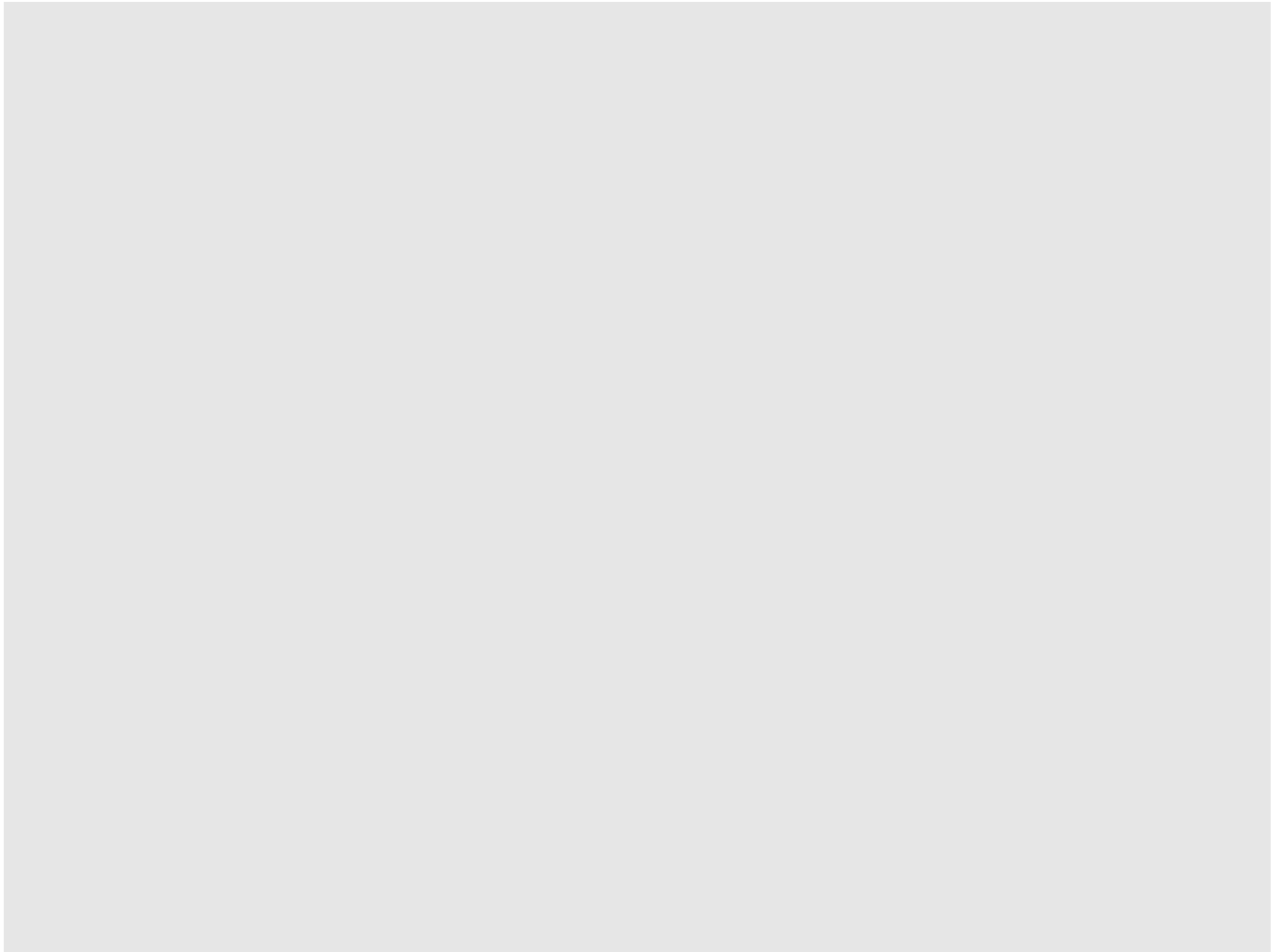
Location: 101 S. Gammon Road

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, Chad Wiese, facilities director for the Madison School District, in July walks through a classroom under construction as part of a \$7.4 million renovation at the middle school.

M.P. KING, STATE JOURNAL

KENNEDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: John F. Kennedy, the nation's 35th president, born May 29, 1917, held office from January 1961 until his assassination in November 1963.

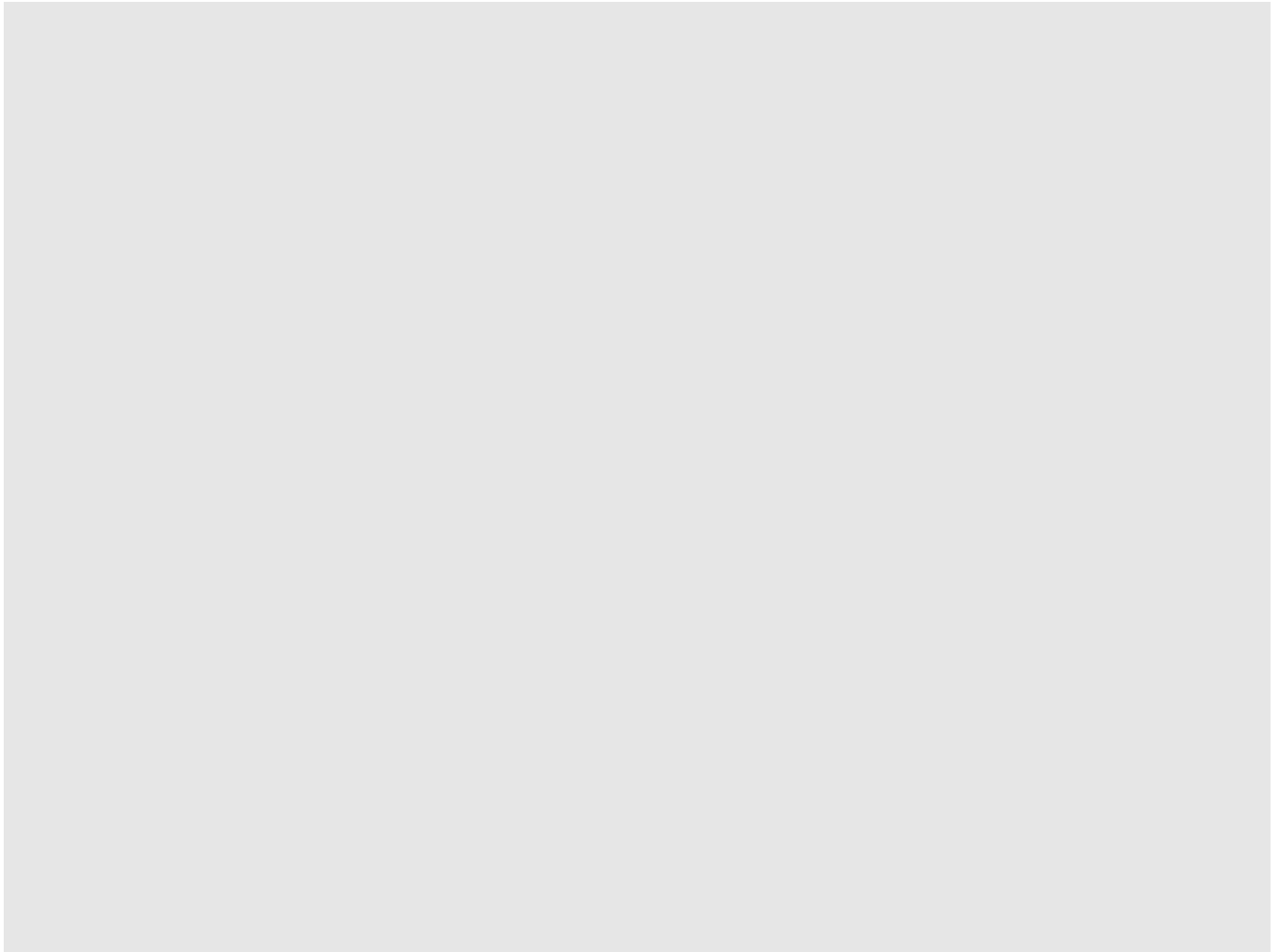
Location: 221 Meadowlark Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above is an exterior of Kennedy Elementary School shot in August 2017.

PHOTO BY MICHELLE STOCKER

LA FOLLETTE HIGH



Who or what named for: Born just outside New Glarus, Robert Marion “Fighting Bob” La Follette (June 14, 1855 – June 18, 1925) was a Republican and Progressive politician who represented Wisconsin in both chambers of Congress and as governor of the state from 1901 to 1906. He sought many progressive reforms as governor, including workers’ compensation and women’s suffrage. He ran for President as a third-party candidate in 1924 and served in the U.S. Senate from 1906-1925.

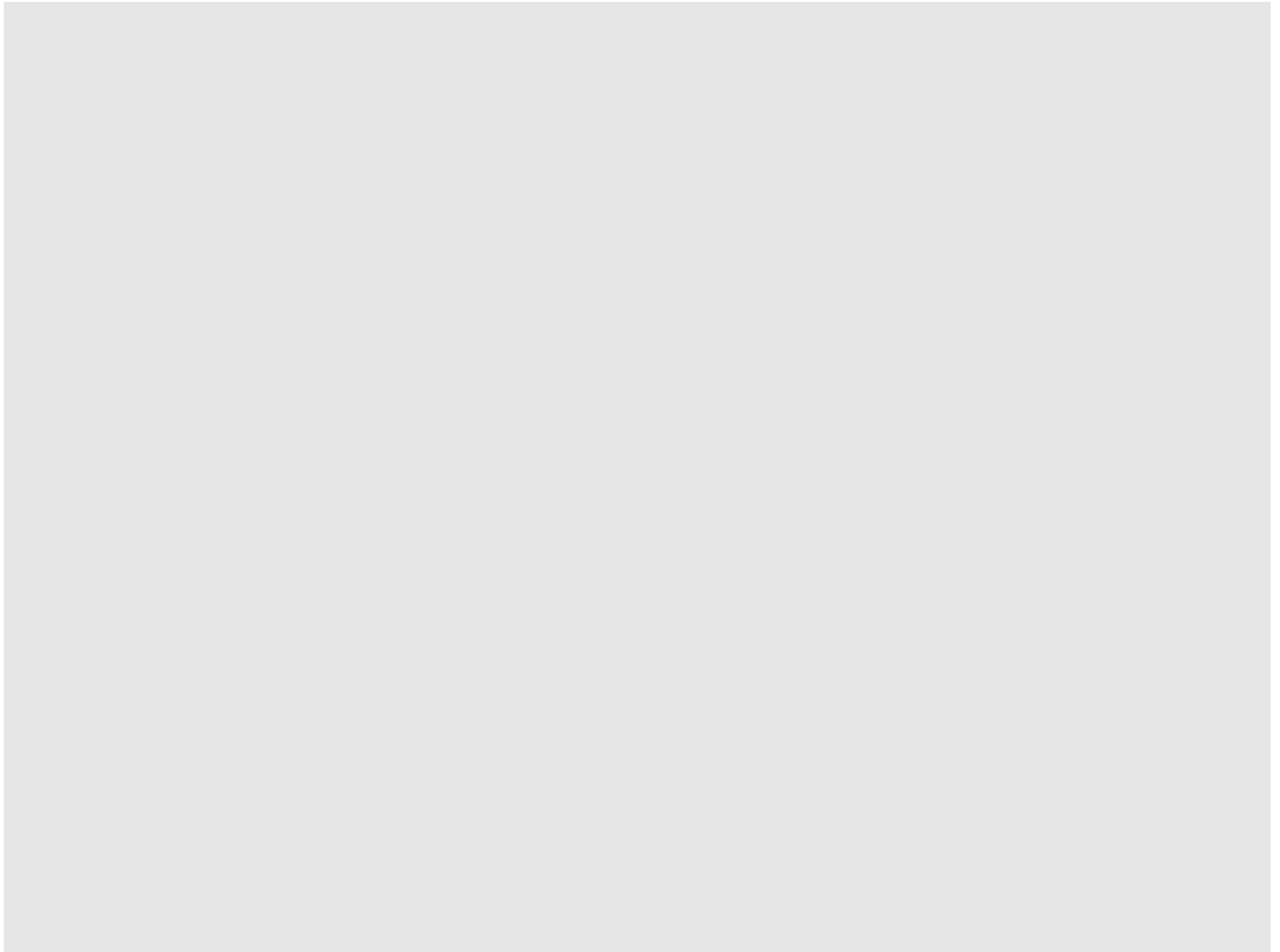
Location: 702 Pflaum Road

Grades: 9-12

Pictured above, junior Sarah Lee reaches for a bowl of food including locally grown sweet potatoes from the UpRoot by REAP food truck April 10 at La Follette.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

LAKE VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is across Warner Park from Lake Mendota, a bit northeast of the lake. It's also across the street from Warner Park Lake or lagoon, so this one's a toss-up, or maybe it's not either-or.

Location: 1802 Tennyson Lane

Grades: K-5th

Pictured above, first graders practice treble clefs at an after-school program in November 2016.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

LAPHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Increase Allen Lapham (March 7, 1811 – Sept. 14, 1875) was an author, scientist and naturalist who moved to the Milwaukee area in 1836. In 1848, he founded the Wisconsin Natural History Association, predecessor of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, of which he also was a charter member.

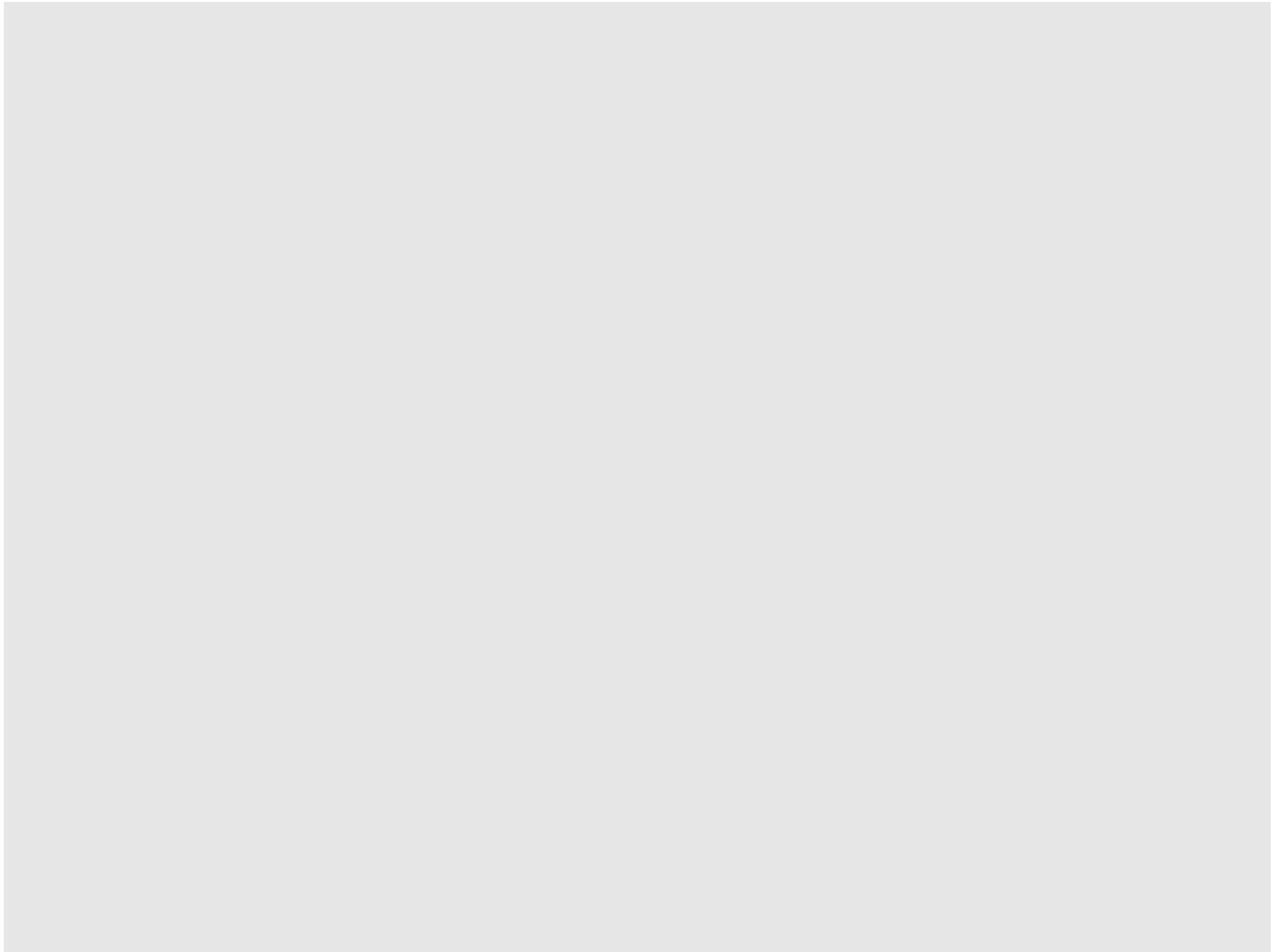
Location: 1045 E. Dayton St.

Grades: K4-2

Pictured above, from left, Demontae Ellison, Mikelle Blue, and Pamodou Barry, all 11, go for a frisbee thrown by a player from the Madison Radicals ultimate frisbee team during a Read Up event at the school in July 2017.

AMBER ARNOLD, STATE JOURNAL

LEOPOLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Aldo Leopold, (1887-1948) famed American author, ecologist and environmentalist, also was the first professor of game management at UW-Madison and published A Sand County Almanac in 1949.

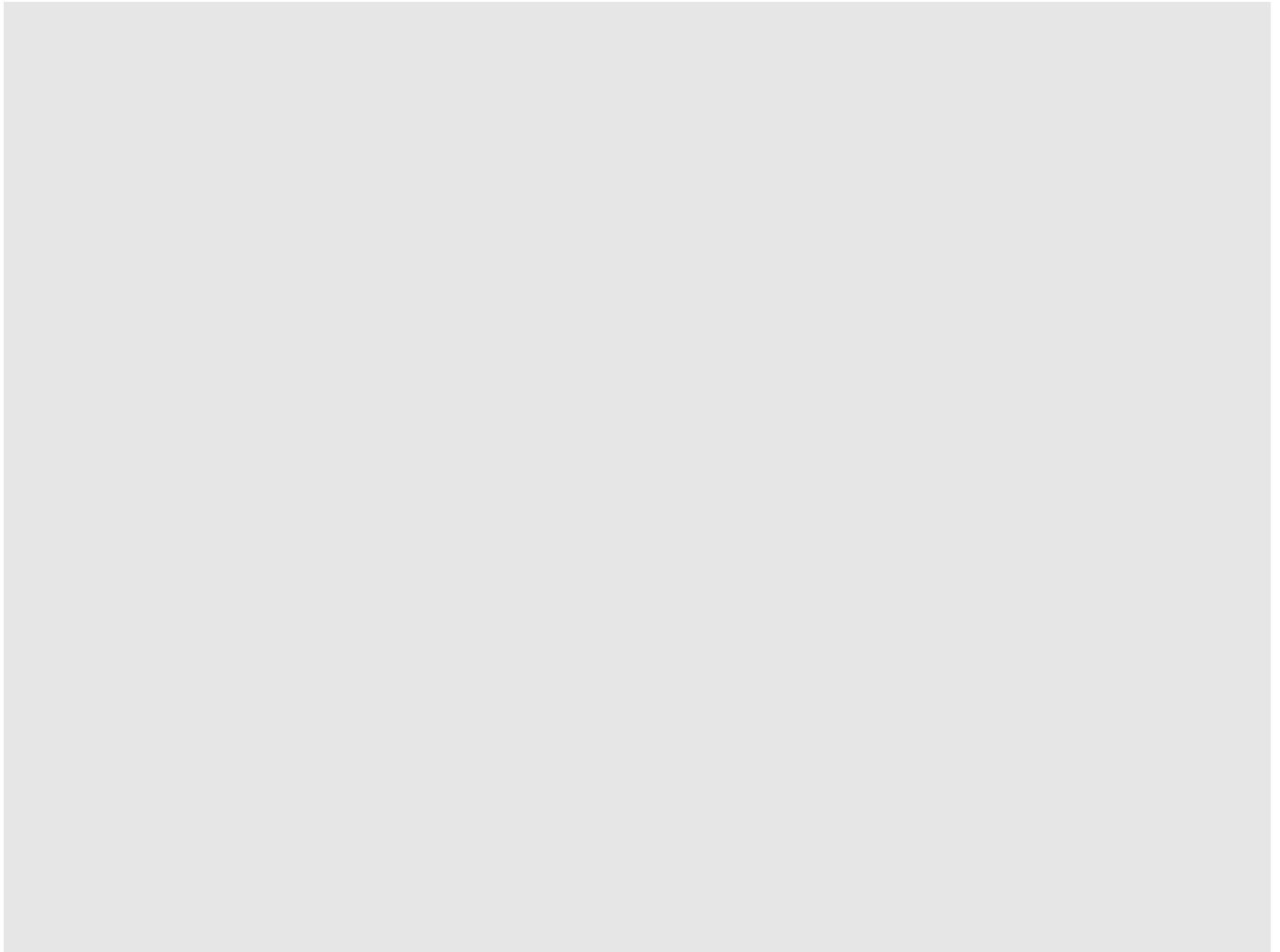
Location: 2602 Post Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, fourth-grade students at Aldo Leopold Elementary School sample reduced sugar maple sap during a trip to the Aldo Leopold Nature Center in March.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Abraham Lincoln (born Feb. 12, 1809) was an American statesman and lawyer who served as the nation's 16th president from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865. He led the United States through the Civil War, preserving the Union, abolishing slavery and strengthening the federal government.

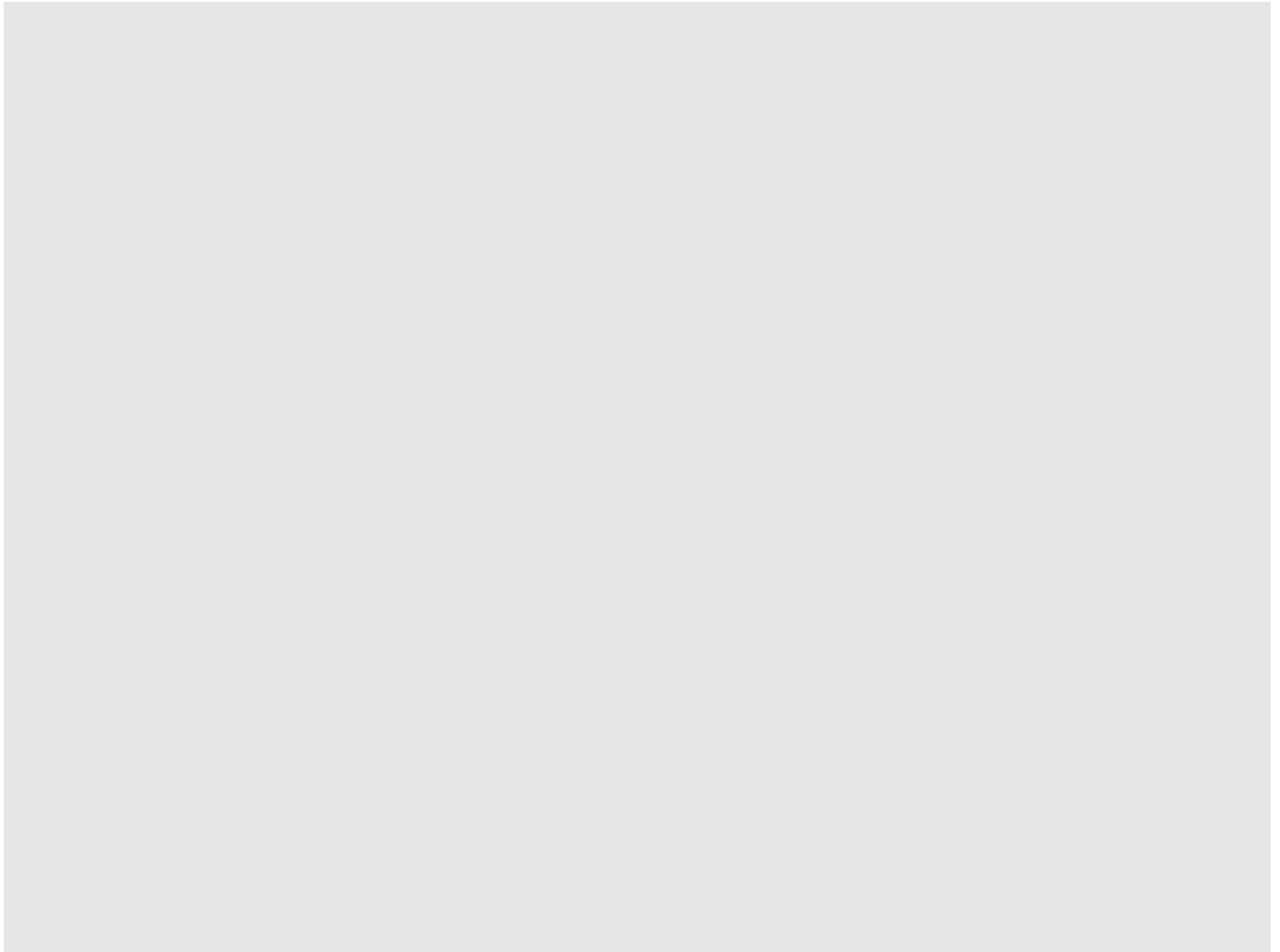
Location: 909 Sequoia Trail

Grades: K4, 3-5

Pictured above, Lincoln Elementary School third-grader Ja'Kiya meets weekly with Madison police Officer Jodi Nelson through a mentoring program called Bigs in Blue. This photo was taken in early March.

MICHELLE STOCKER, THE CAPITAL TIMES

LINDBERGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Charles Lindbergh (February 4, 1902 – August 26, 1974) was an American aviator, military officer, author, inventor, explorer, and environmental activist. He won world fame by making the first solo transatlantic flight, a non-stop flight between North America and Europe in 1927.

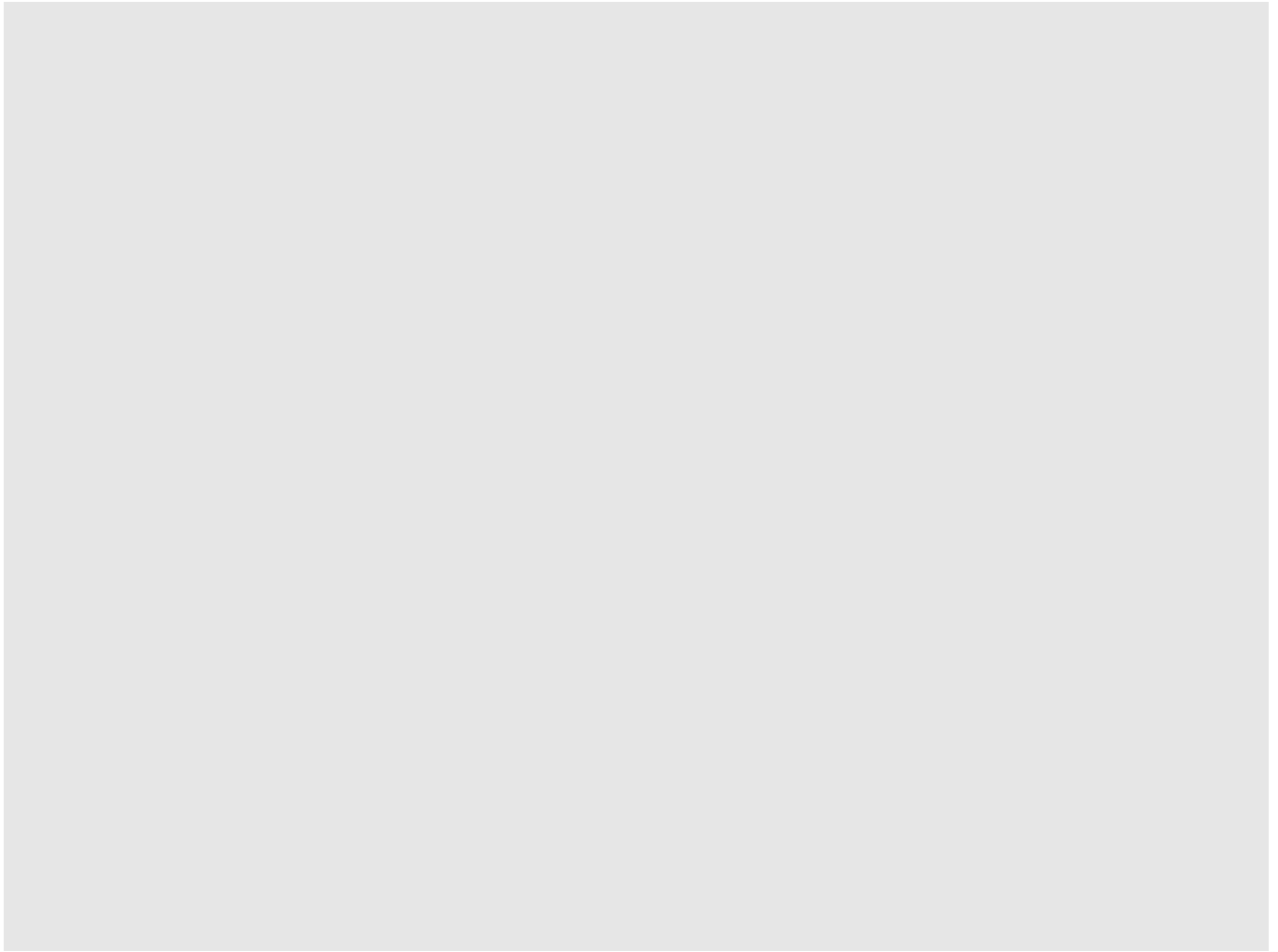
Location: 4500 Kennedy Road.

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, the school sign outside Lindbergh shows an airplane above the full school name.

MADISON SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: James Russell Lowell (1819–1891) was a Harvard College and Harvard Law School graduate best known as an American Romantic poet and member of a New England writers' group known as the “Fireside Poets.”

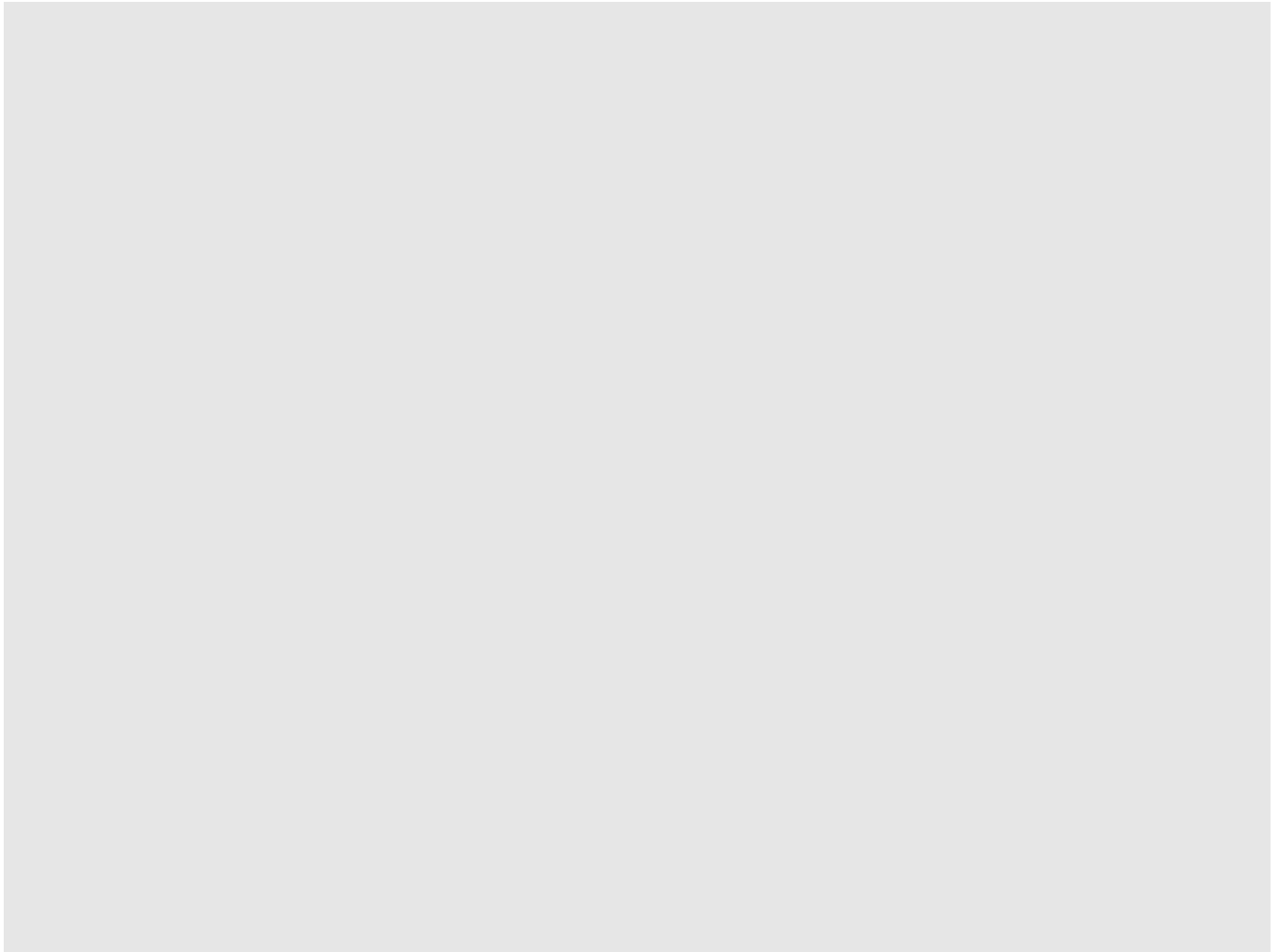
Location: 401 Maple Ave.

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, the cafeteria, carved out of two kindergarten classrooms, has a homey feel, complete with a tiled fireplace. “This isn’t a standard school. It’s 100 years old and we’re celebrating that,” Principal John Burkholder said in May 2017.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

MARQUETTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Jacques Marquette, (1637–1675), a French missionary and explorer best known as the first European to see and map the northern portion of the Mississippi River. He founded missions in present-day Michigan and later joined fellow explorer Louis Joliet on an expedition to discover and map the Mississippi River.

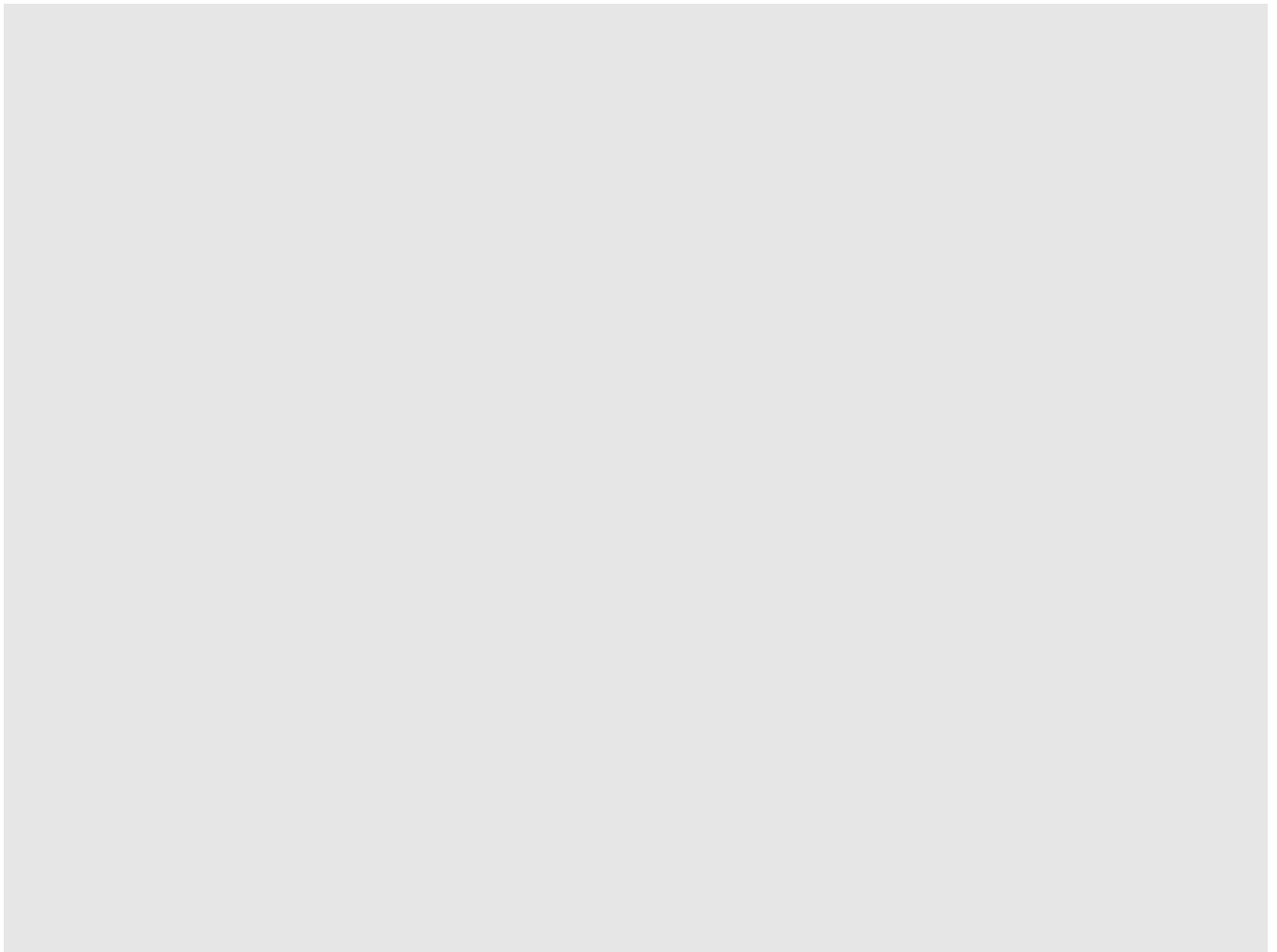
Location: 1501 Jenifer St.

Grades: 3-5

Pictured above, the school sign outside Marquette.

MADISON SCHOOL DISTRICT

MENDOTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is one block off Northport Drive near Lake Mendota.

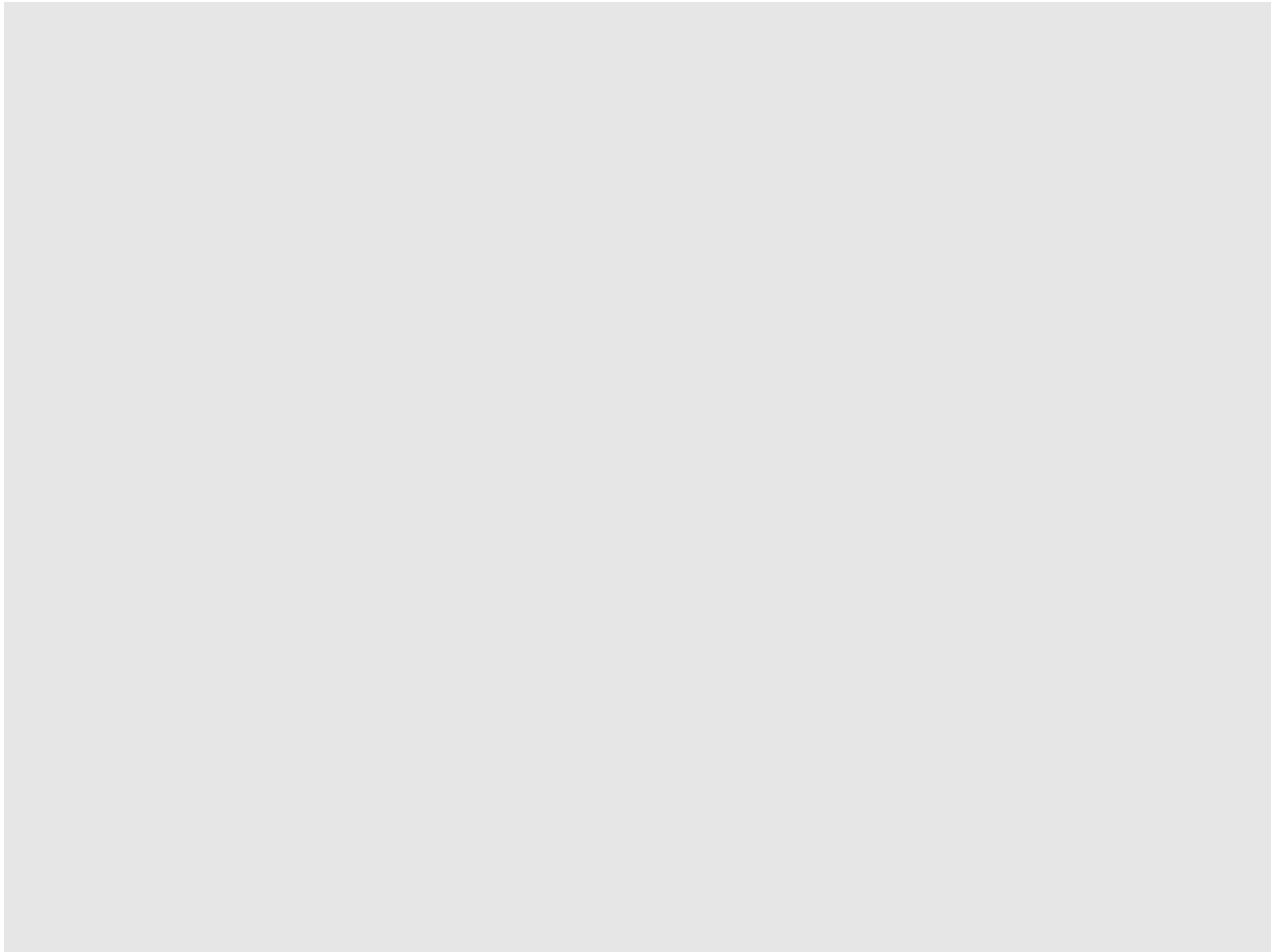
Location: 4002 School Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, students enter the school as they are greeted by community members in September 2017.

AMBER C. WALKER, CAPITAL TIMES

MIDVALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school sits on the east side of South Midvale Boulevard and includes enrollment from the adjacent Midvale Heights neighborhood, an area first settled in the 1850s. The school also is the site of the 26-plot Midvale Elementary/Community Garden.

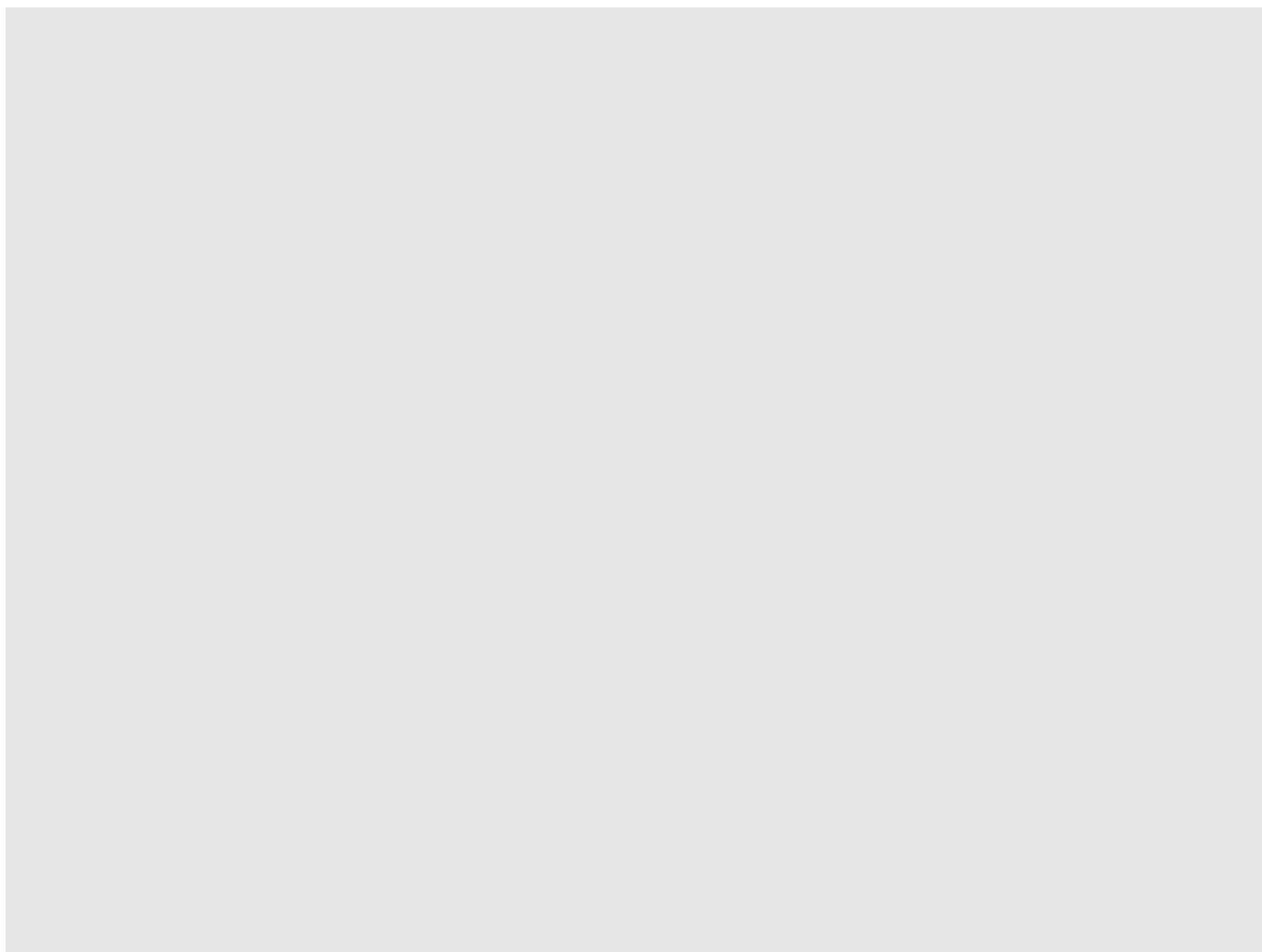
Location: 502 Caromar Drive

Grades: K4-2

Pictured above, students at Midvale use a then-new handicap-accessible ramp at the school in September 2016. Midvale saw \$2.7 million in upgrades that year, including a new playground and cafeteria, ramps, lifts and other structural changes to improve accessibility.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

MUIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Scottish-American naturalist John Muir (April 21, 1838 – December 24, 1914) was an author, environmental philosopher and early advocate for the preservation of U.S. wilderness. Co-founder of the Sierra Club in California, Muir left his Marquette County family farm when he was 22 to study at UW-Madison for a few years before leaving to travel the country.

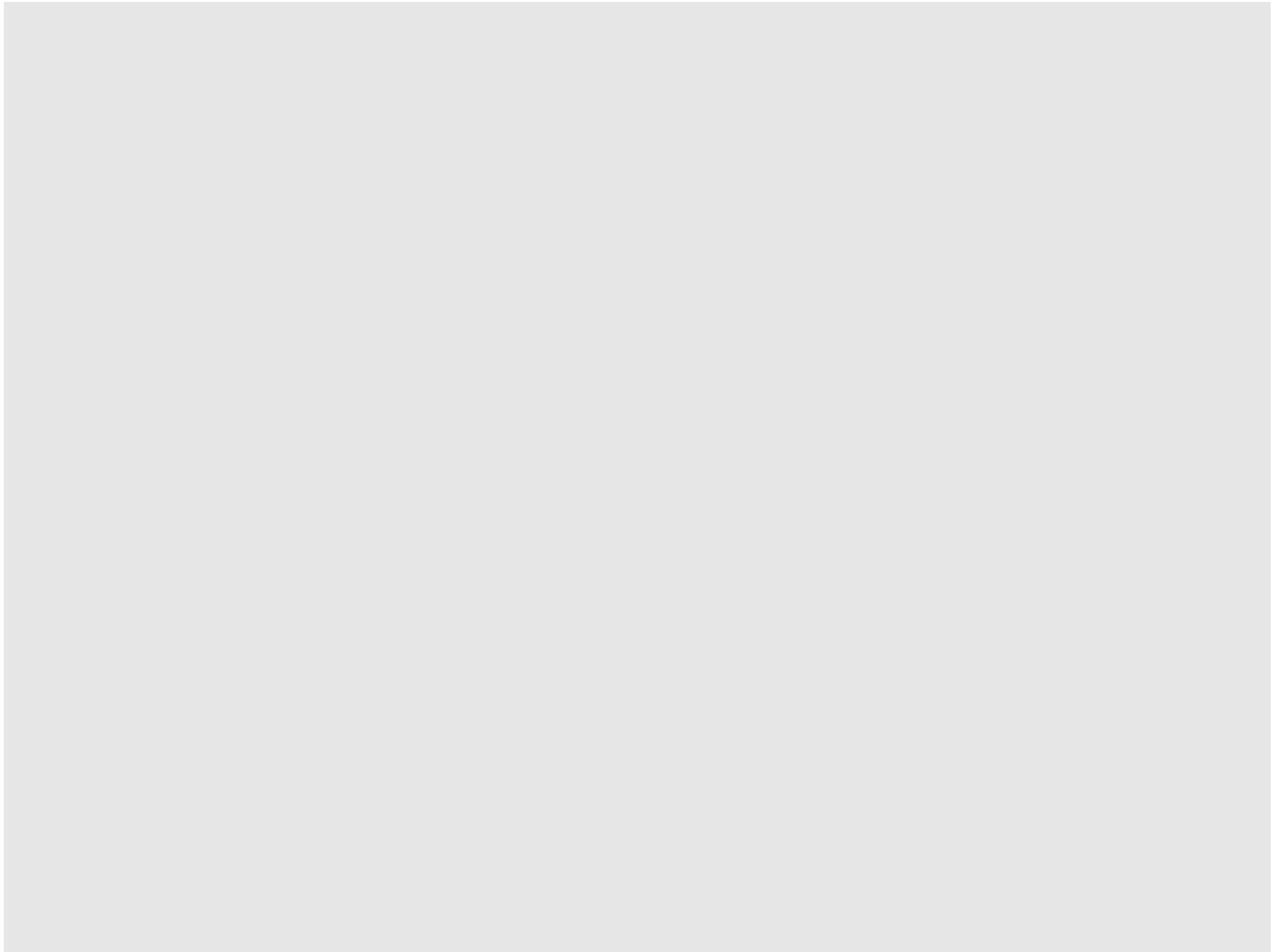
Location: 6602 Inner Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above is an exterior shot of the school.

MADISON SCHOOL DISTRICT

NUESTRO MUNDO COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The Spanish name given this dual-language immersion, in-district charter school translates to "Our World" in English.

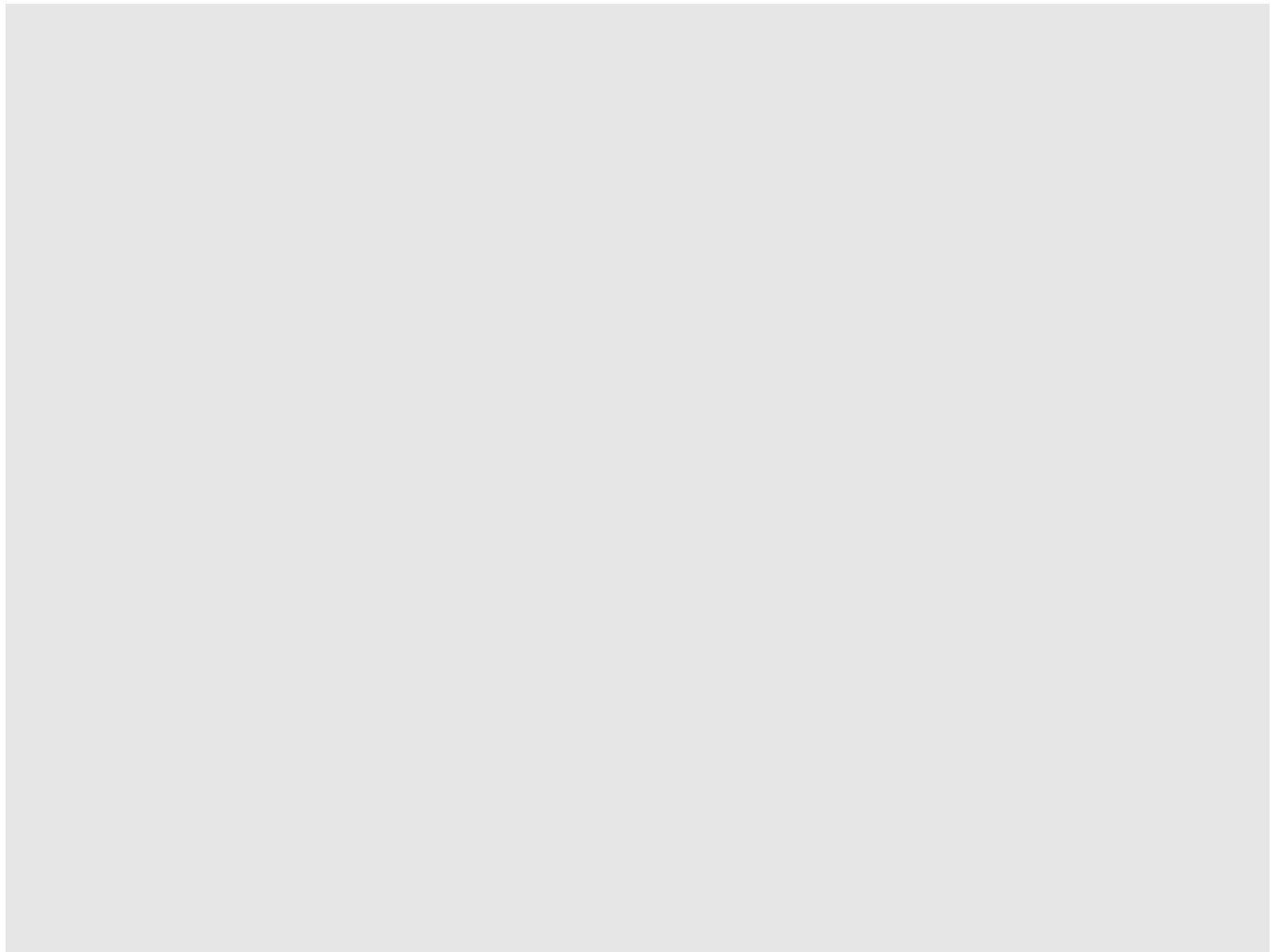
Location: 902 Nichols Road

Grades: K-5

Pictured above, a sign posted in one of the classrooms at Nuestro Mundo Community School in March 2017.

MICHELLE STOCKER, THE CAPITAL TIMES

O'KEEFFE MIDDLE



Who or what named for: Named for Georgia O'Keeffe, the school opened in 1939 as Marquette Junior High and was renamed in the artist's honor in fall 1993. O'Keeffe was an internationally known painter who was born in Sun Prairie in 1887 and lived for a short time in the school's neighborhood, according to the school website. Best known for her paintings of enlarged flowers, along with landscapes and New York skyscrapers, O'Keeffe was recognized as the "Mother of American modernism." She died in 1986 in New Mexico.

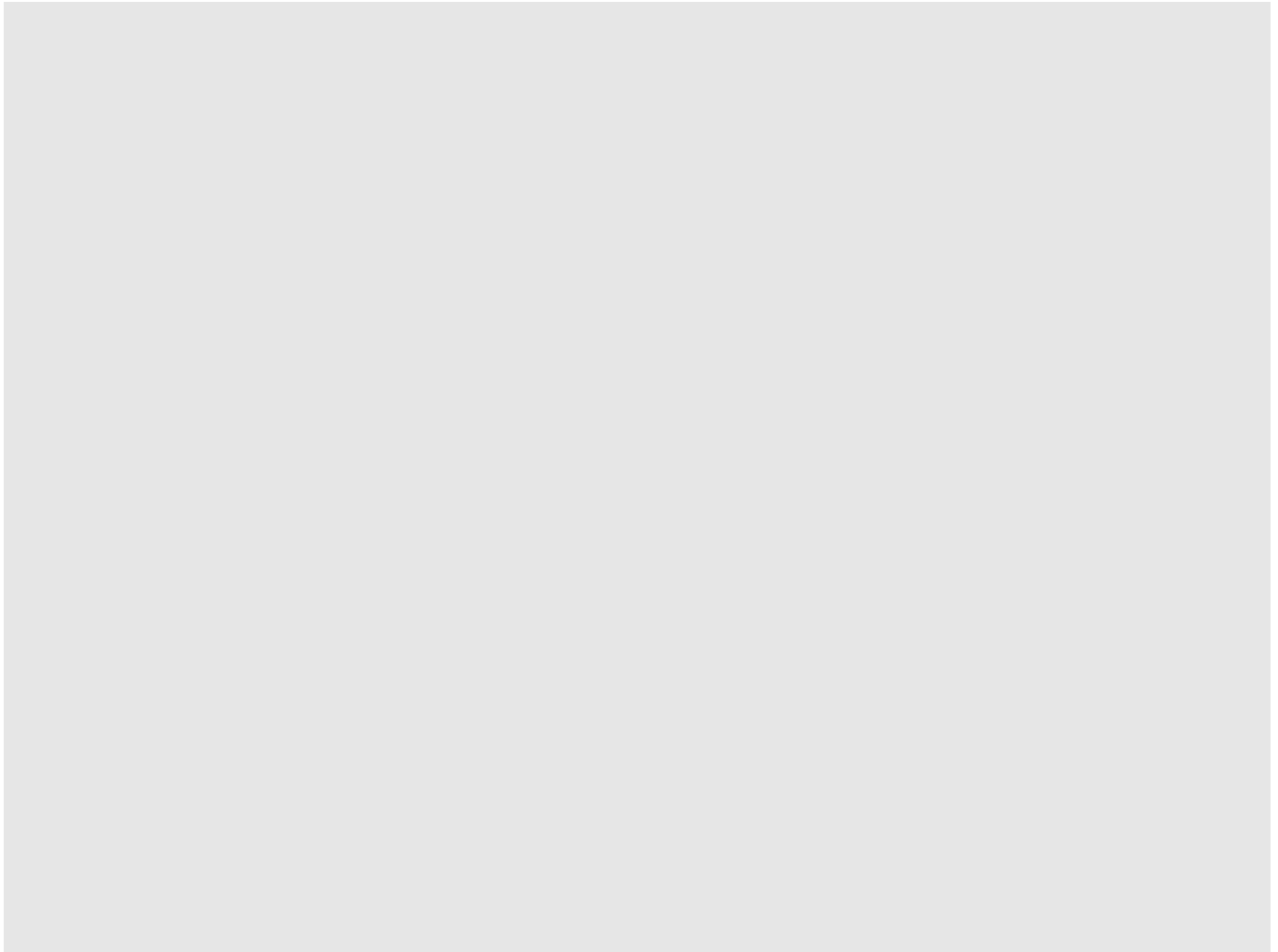
Location: 510 S. Thornton Ave.

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, Kyah Cary, sixth grade, works with Pig In a Fur Coat chef Daniel Bonanno on making butternut squash-stuffed cappellacci during the "Top Chef" fundraiser in late April at O'Keeffe.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

OLSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Paul J. Olson (1909-1993) was a longtime conservationist and school principal who helped organize the purchase of the Madison School Forest for use as an outdoor conservation classroom. He spent 42 years as a teacher and principal for the school district, including 23 years as Midvale Elementary's first principal.

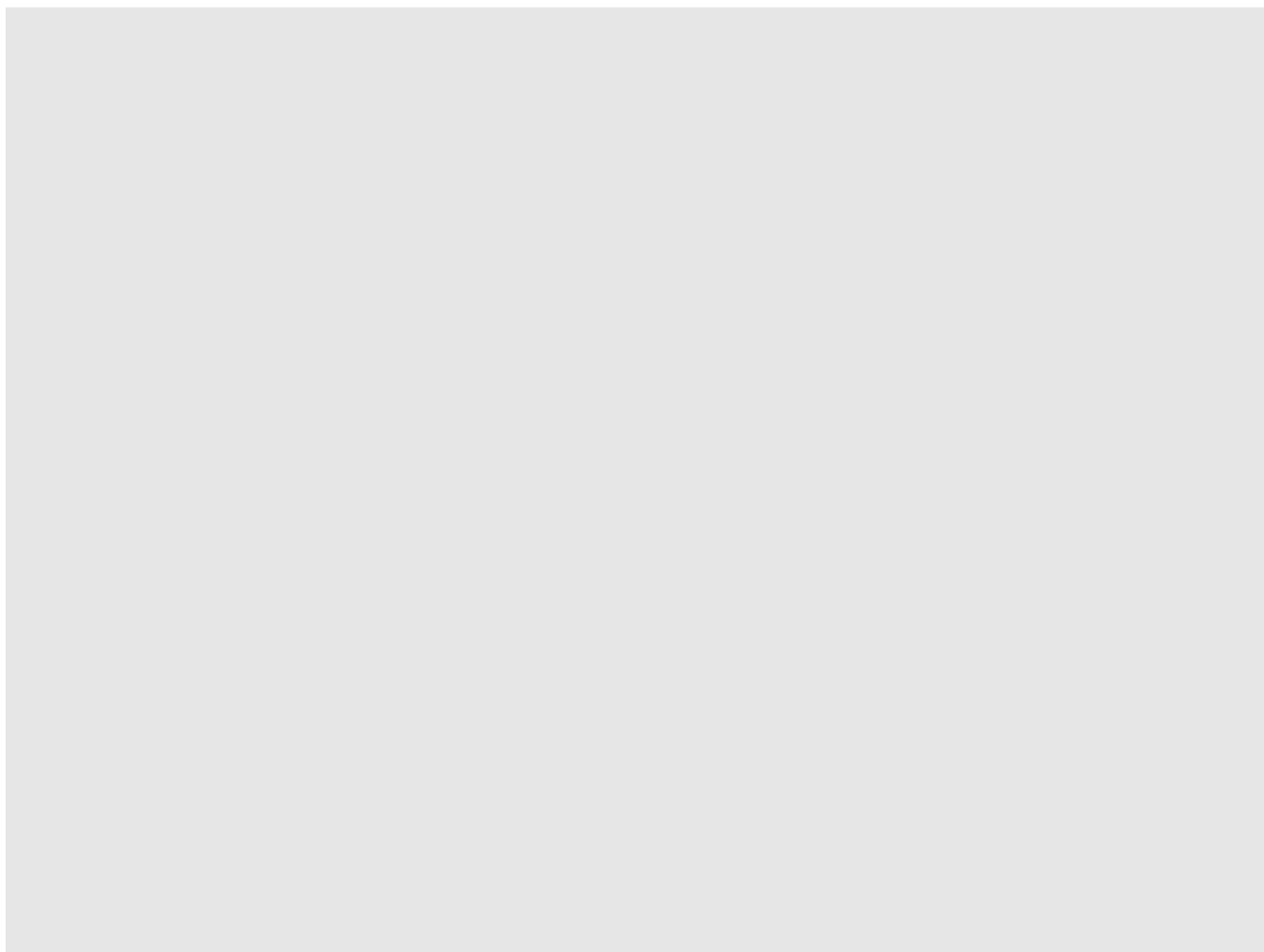
Location: 801 Redan Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Madison Fire Department firefighters Sarah Fox, Troy Dankle and Jim Schmitt lead students through a fire simulation at the school in October.

AMBER C. WALKER, THE CAPITAL TIMES

ORCHARD RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is located within the Orchard Ridge Neighborhood Association, which got its name from the original subdivision of the same name by developers John C. McKenna Jr. and Charles H. Gill.

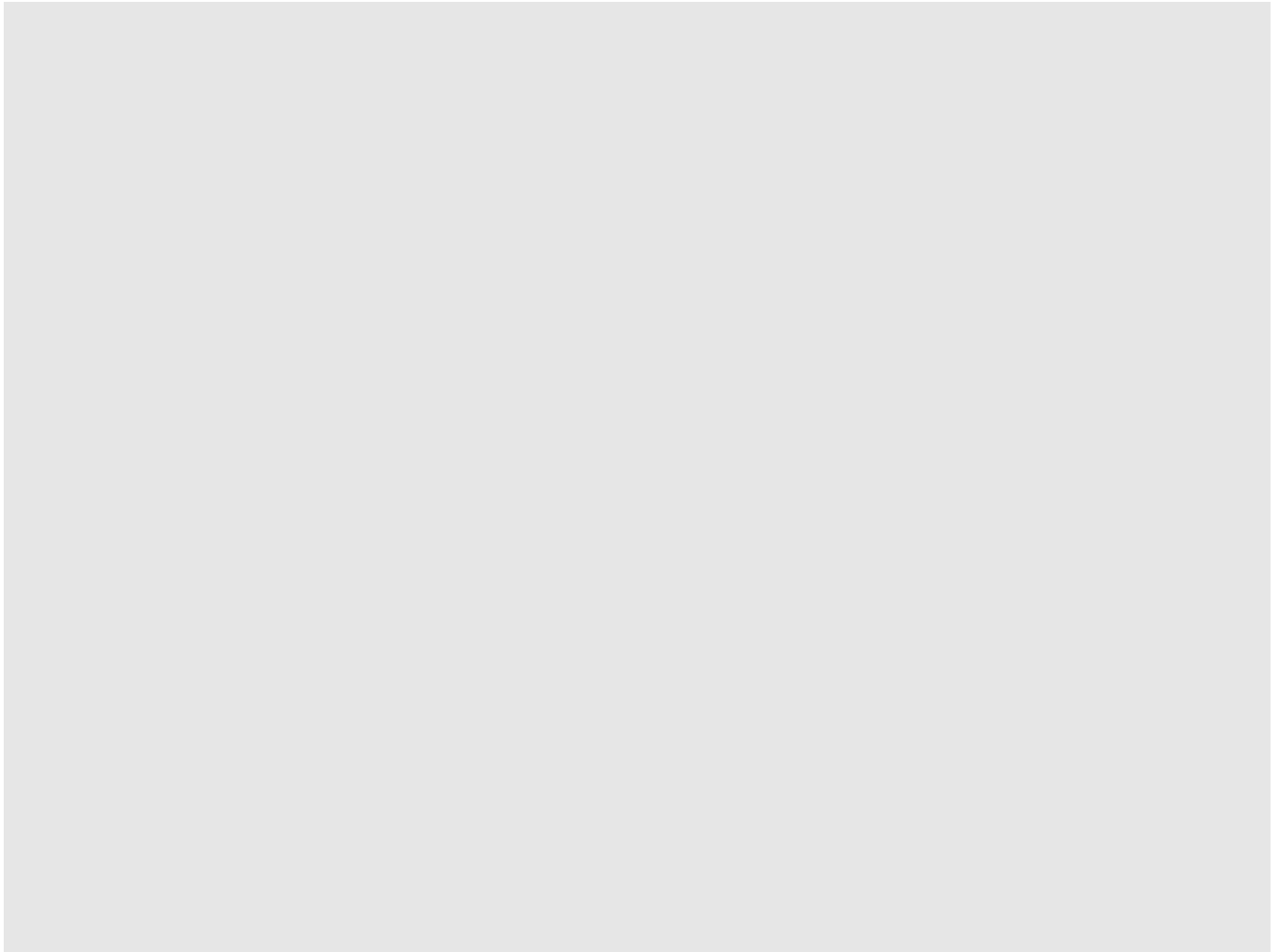
Location: 5602 Russett Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Emma Serrano, center, 10, signals to her teacher Crystal Davis that she needs water during math class at the school in February 2015.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

RANDALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school enrolls its students “within cheering distance” of Camp Randall Stadium, as the school says on its website. Camp Randall, in turn, the football stadium on the UW-Madison campus, sits on the grounds of historic Camp Randall, a former Union Army training camp during the Civil War. The camp was named after then-Governor Alexander Randall, who later became Postmaster General of the United States.

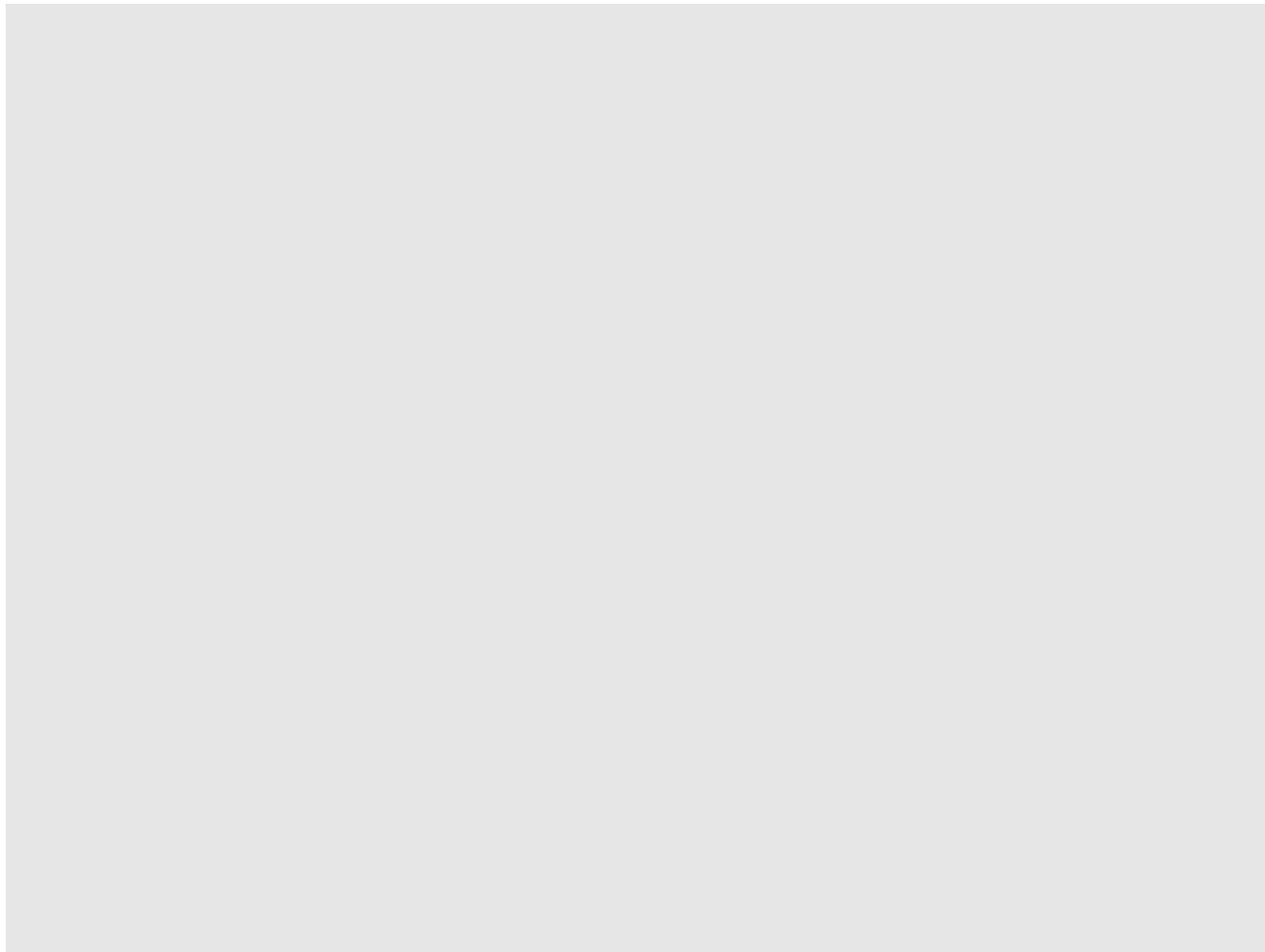
Location: 1802 Regent St.

Grades: 3-5

Pictured above, computer sciences professor Andrea Arpaci-Dusseau works with students enrolled in a UW-Madison Computer Science Catapult Club at Randall Elementary in April 2017. The outreach club pairs UW students with K-12 students throughout the Madison school system to teach children how to code.

BRYCE RICHTER – UW-Madison

SANDBURG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Carl Sandburg (January 6, 1878 – July 22, 1967) was a Swedish-American poet, writer, and editor who won Pulitzer Prizes for his poetry and his biography of Abraham Lincoln. U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson described Sandburg as "more than the voice of America, more than the poet of its strength and genius. He was America."

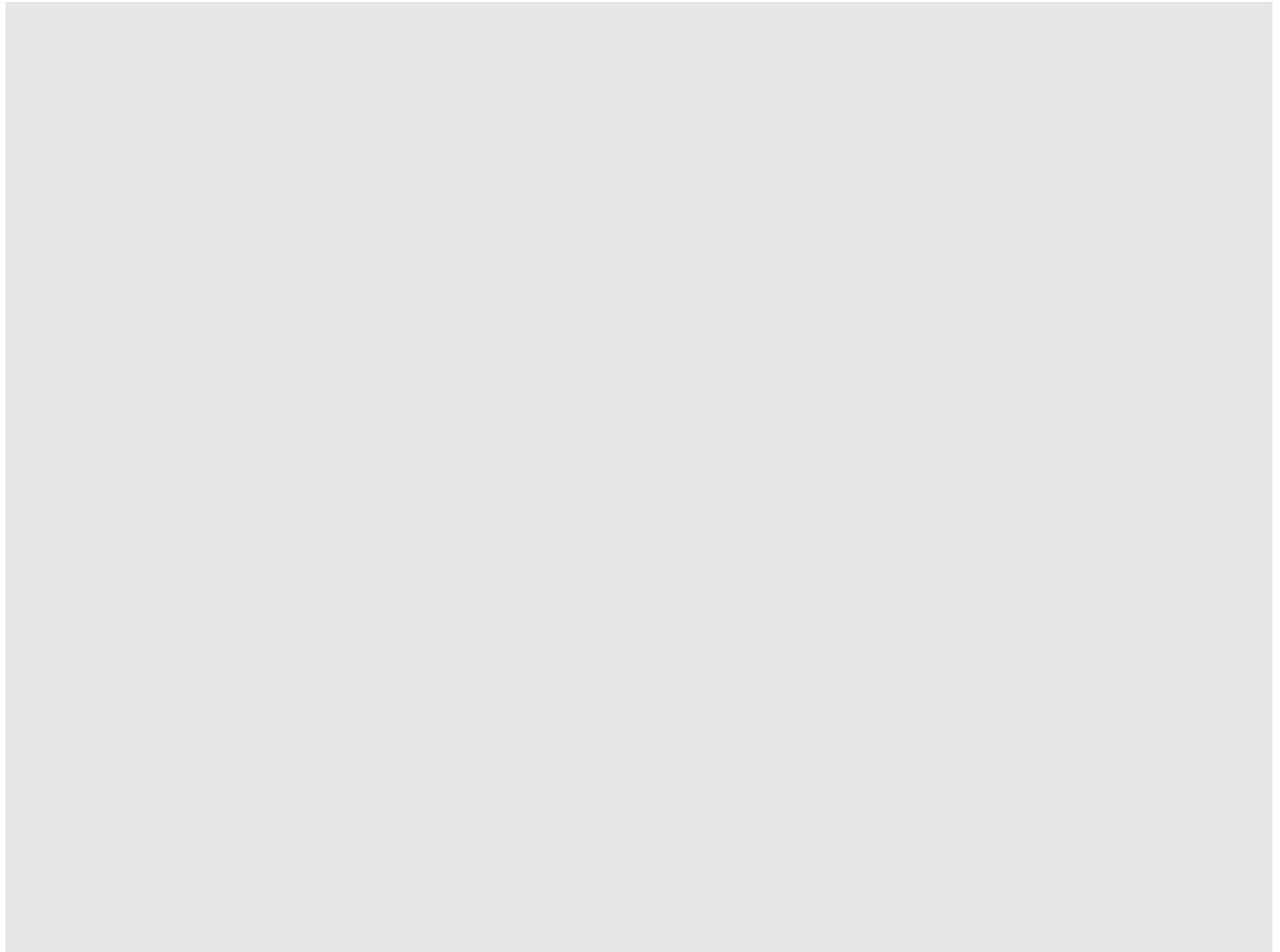
Location: 4114 Donald Drive

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, teacher Jennifer Wolfe in April 2017 demonstrates the features of a FitDesk Cycle for students in grades 2-5. Paid for by grant funds, every classroom and the library and resource room is to have one that students will be able to use next school year to assist learning by burning off energy during the school day.

Karen Rivedal | Wisconsin State Journal

SCHENK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: A businessman and politician, Herbert Schenk (June 26, 1880 – April 18, 1972) served as a Wisconsin Progressive Party member of the Wisconsin Assembly from Dane County. He attended Madison public schools and was a lumber yard manager and hardware dealer. He is buried at Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison.

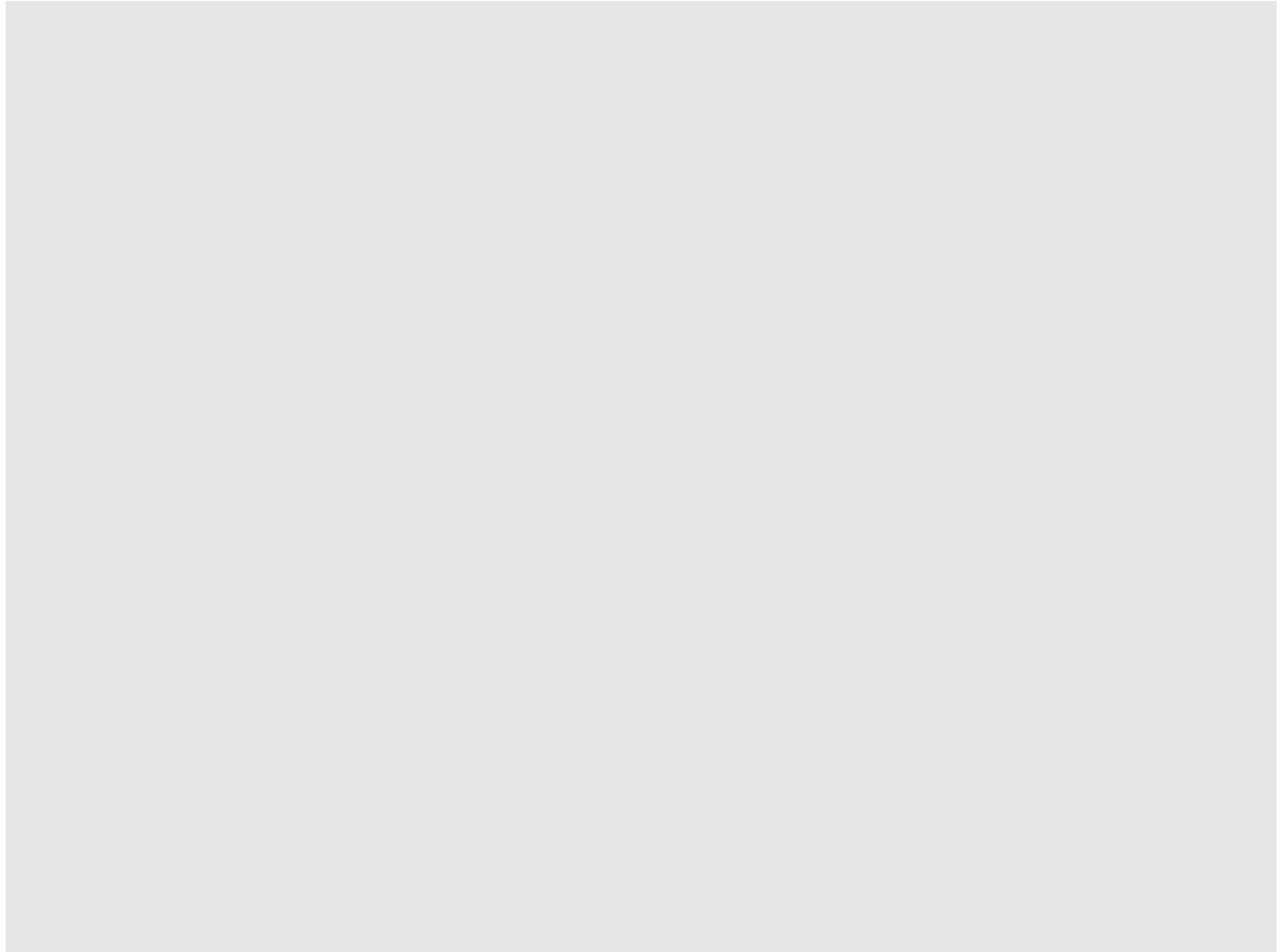
Location: 230 Schenk St.

Grades: K-5

Pictured above, Fred Leidel reads to kindergartner Lee Mueller at Schenk Elementary School on November 28, 2016, six days before he turned 100. "Grandpa Fred" had read to Schenk kindergartners twice a week since 2010.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

SENNETT MIDDLE SCHOOL



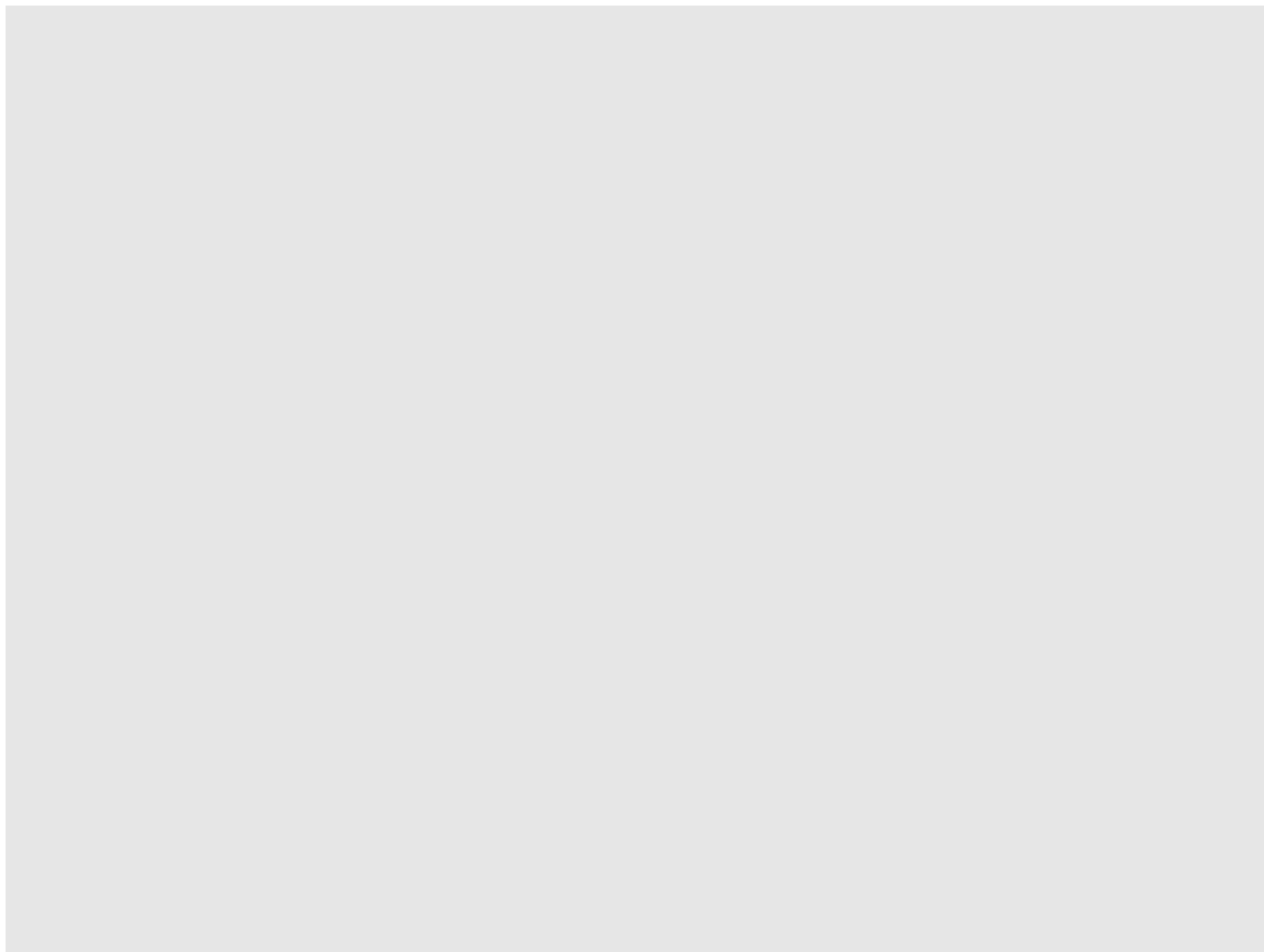
Who or what named for: Before 1970, Sennett Middle School was named Lafollette Middle School for its proximity to La Follette High School. The Madison School Board renamed the school in honor of Ray F. Sennett, a former board president and board member for 23 years who had recently died. A 1939 graduate of UW-Madison, Sennett was a prominent Madison citizen, according to the school's website — vice president of two banks, vice president of the Madison Chamber of Commerce, past president of the Eastside Businessmen's Club and a March of Dimes campaign chairman.

Location: 502 Plfaum Road

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, sixth grader Milo Rouse learns how to use a combination lock from teacher Lori Longhini on his first day of school at Sennett Middle School Sept. 1.

SHERMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is located about a block east of North Sherman Avenue on Madison's North Side. The street was named for Roger Sherman, a signer of the U.S. Constitution from Connecticut.

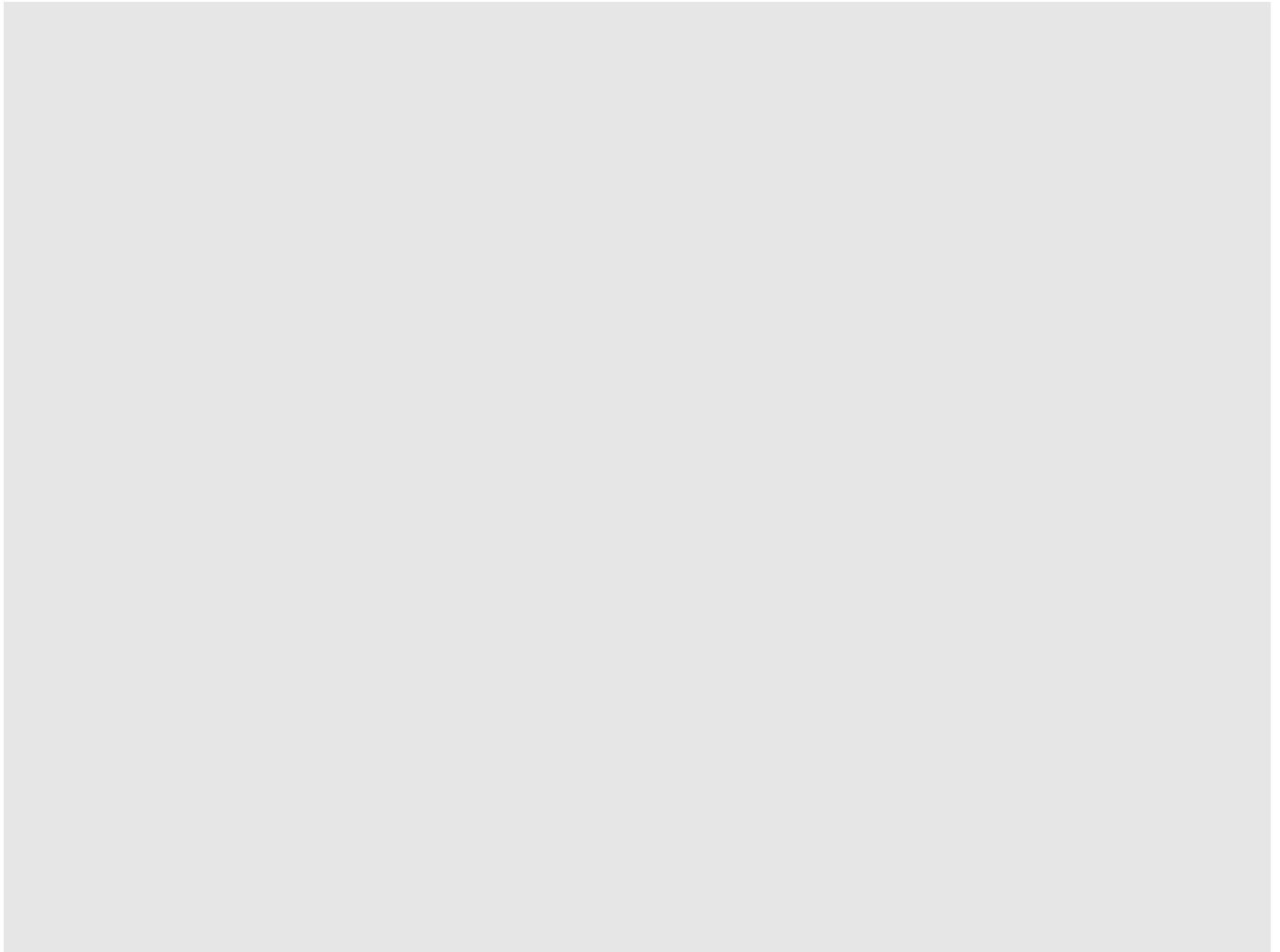
Location: 1701 Ruskin St.

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, Sherman students sign a petition on gun control as they and hundreds of other Madison-area students gathered outside East High School before marching up East Washington Avenue during a school walkout and Capitol rally for gun control in March.

AMBER ARNOLD, STATE JOURNAL

SHOREWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is located in the center of the village of Shorewood Hills, a Madison suburb since 1927 with a 2010 Census population of 1,565.

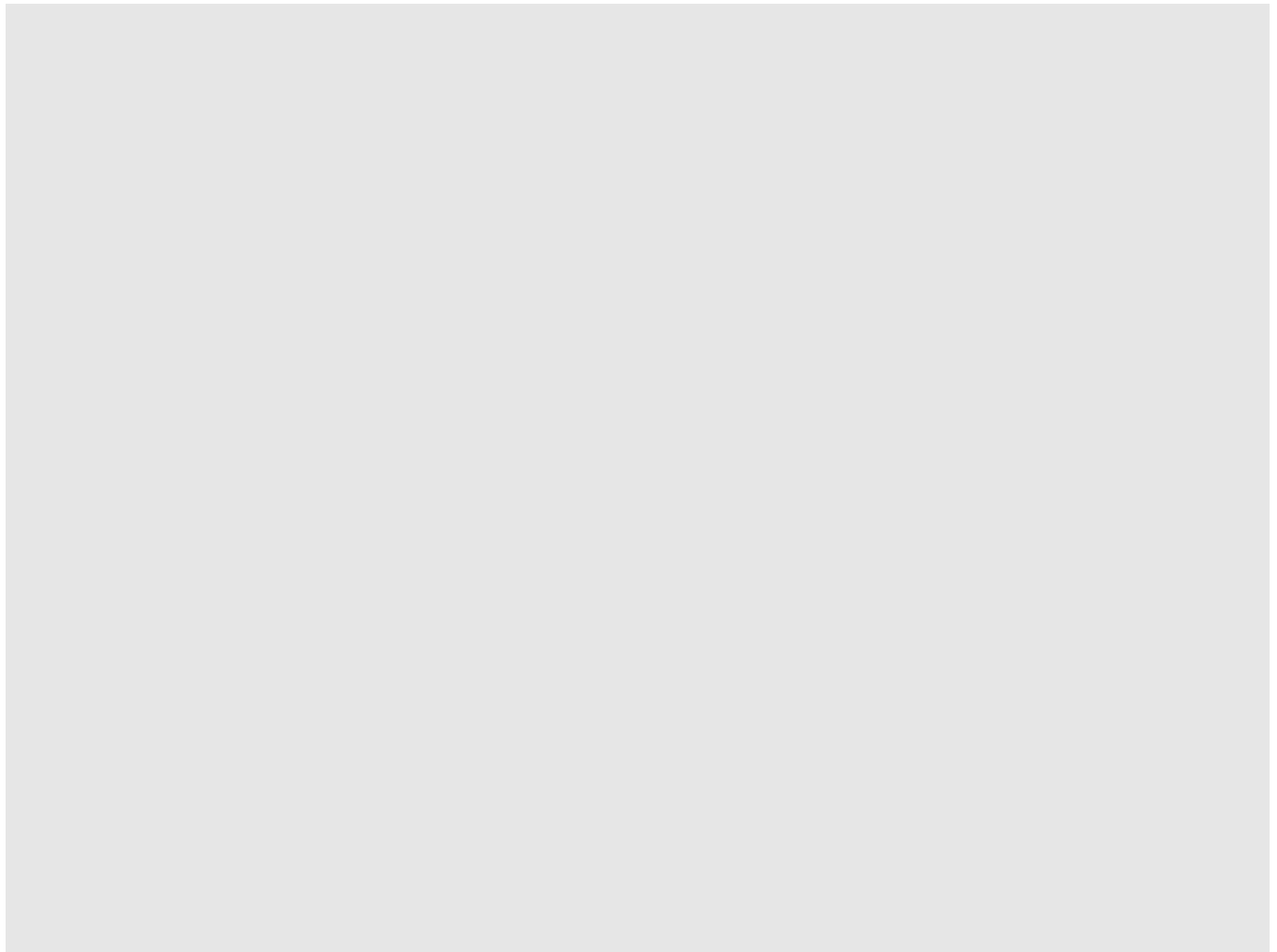
Location: 1105 Shorewood Boulevard

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, children play on the school's new playground equipment in September 2017.

PHOTO BY GREG DIXON

SPRING HARBOR MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The school is part of the city's Spring Harbor neighborhood, a lakeshore oasis which hugs the southwest corner of Lake Mendota and features Spring Harbor beach as well. Opened in fall 1996, the magnet school has an emphasis on environmental science "as our name implies," according to the school website.

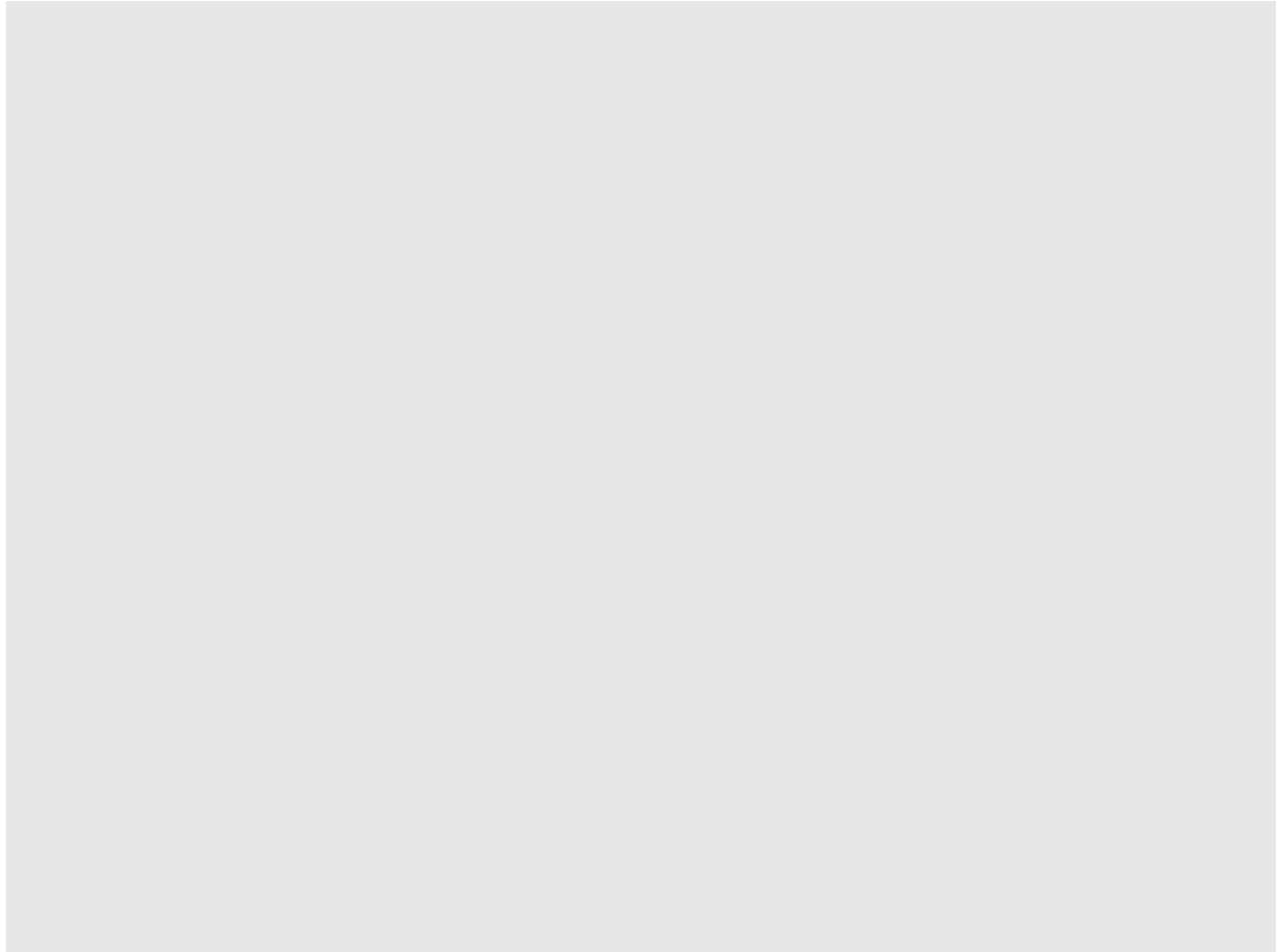
Location: 1110 Spring Harbor Drive

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, visitors to the Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Greenhouse at Spring Harbor Middle School explore the newly-opened learning center and surrounding gardens during an Earth Day celebration and dedication of the facility at the school on April 22, 2016.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

STEPHENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Glenn W. Stephens (May 15, 1892 - July 31, 1965) was a lawyer and long-time member and past president of the Madison School Board. Born in Chicago Heights, Illinois, Stephens moved to Madison for college in 1911, earning a "bachelor of laws" from UW-Madison in 1916, according to a large plaque that hangs in a hallway at Stephens Elementary.

After serving in World War I as an infantry captain from 1917-1919, Stephens returned to Madison to practice law, becoming a senior member of his firm in 1923. He was appointed to the school board to fill an unexpired term in 1927 and then served on the board for many years.

In 1961, the then-newly built elementary school was named for him, and he had grandchildren at the time who attended it. A charter member of the Zor Shrine, Stephens also was past president or potentate of the Madison Club, the Midwest Shrine Association and the Dane County Bar Association.

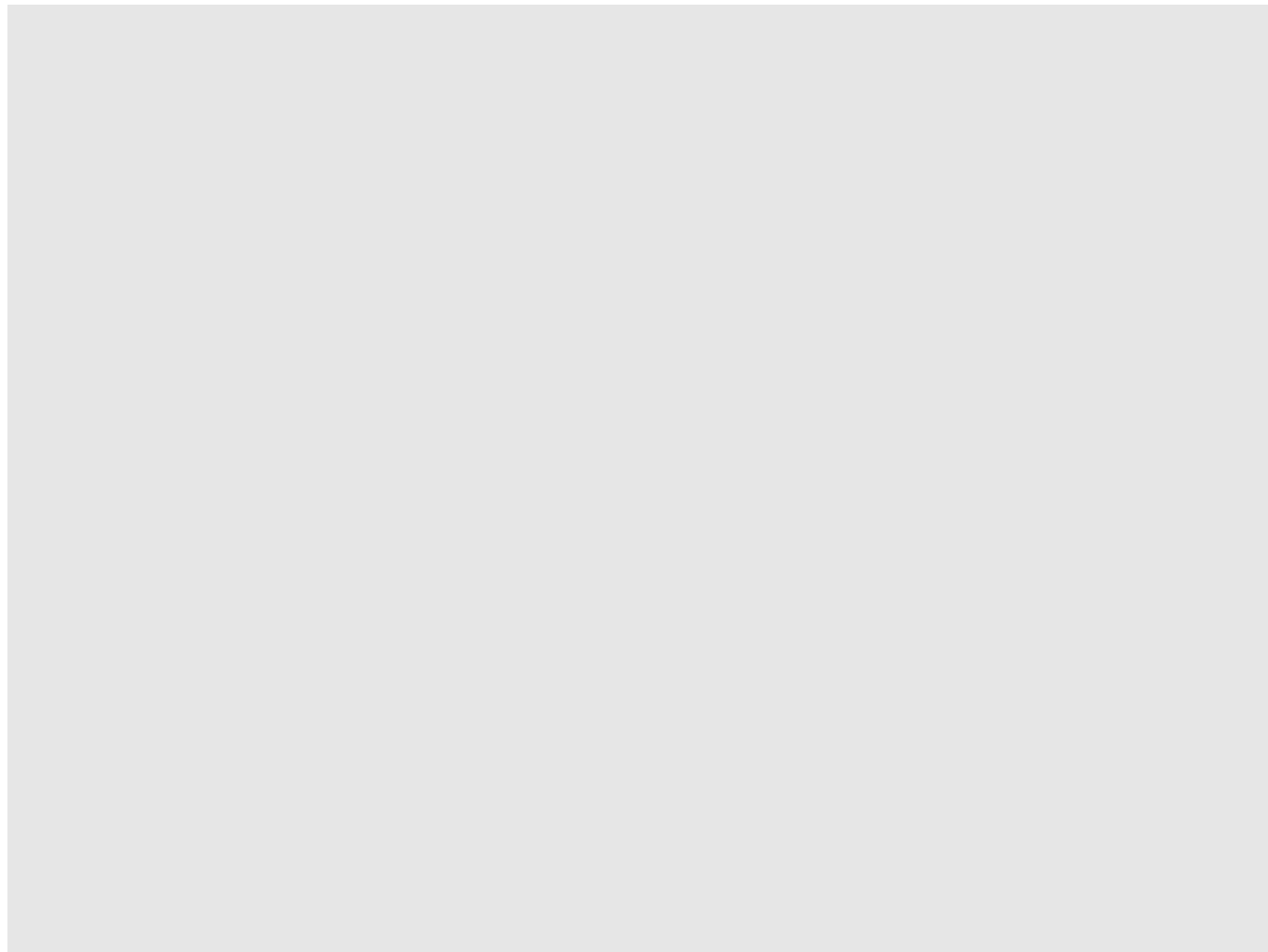
Location: 120 S. Rosa Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Stephens Elementary School student Marley Patterson views a collection of pinwheels, elements in the school's kindness curriculum. Children learn how to control their breathing by blowing on the pinwheels.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

THOREAU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Henry David Thoreau (July 12 1817 – May 6, 1862) was an American writer, poet, naturalist, tax resister, development critic, and historian best known for his book "Walden," described as a meditation on living simply in the natural world.

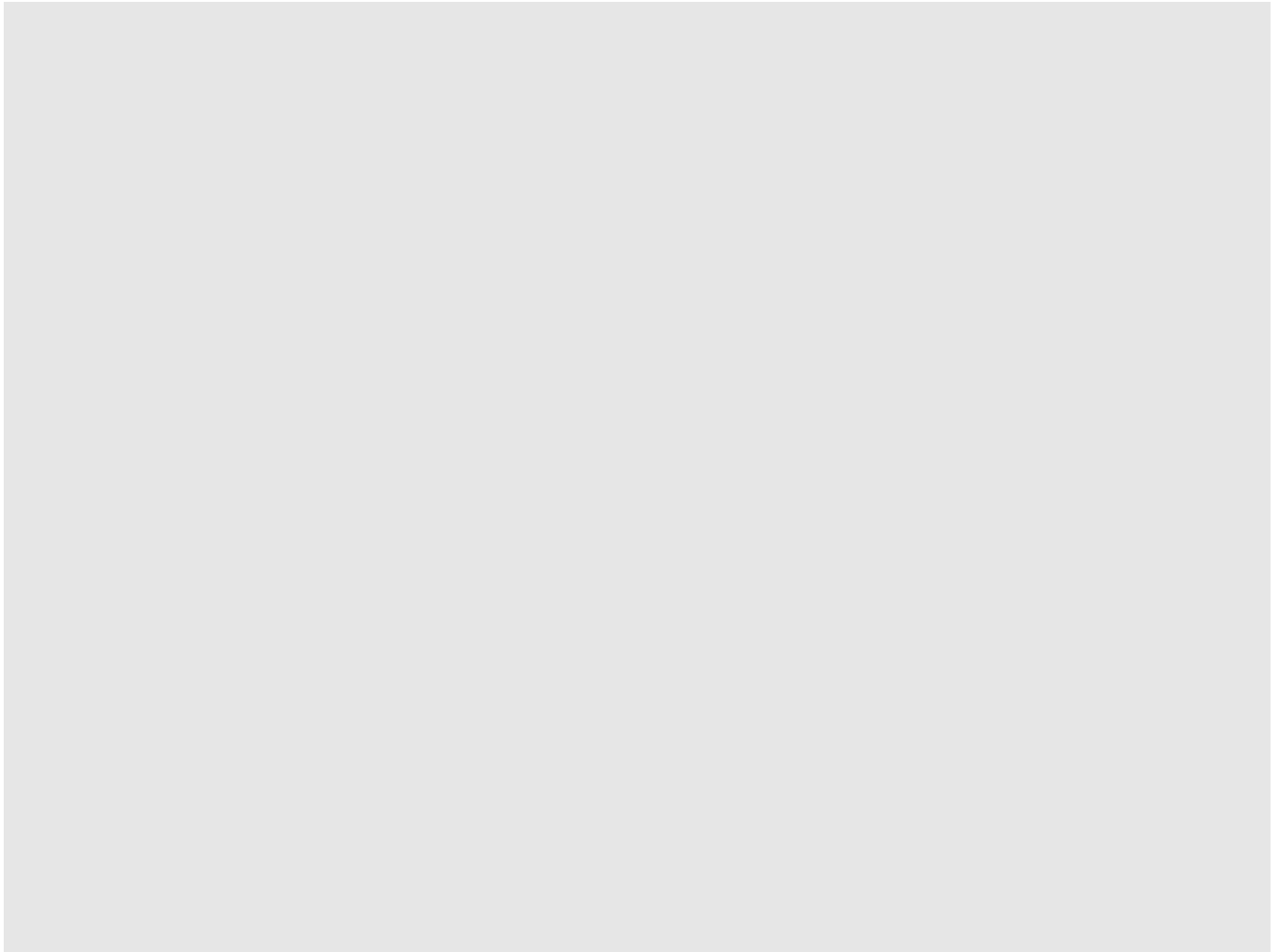
Location: 3870 Nakoma Road

Grades: K4-5th

Pictured above, Sonya Sankaran reads "Wishtree" by Katherine Applegate to her daughter, Satya Sankaran-Lippert, who is in kindergarten, during a family engagement night at the school in February. The book, which addresses issues on immigration, diversity and friendship, was read to every student at Thoreau.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

TOKI MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: In 1993, the Madison School Board changed the name of Orchard Ridge Middle School to Akira R. Toki Middle School. Akira R. Toki (1916 – 2012) was a Madison native who fought in Italy and France with the U. S. Army in World War II and was later a member and leader of many veterans groups. He also served as a volunteer for 23,000 hours at the Madison Veterans Hospital over a period of 58 years.

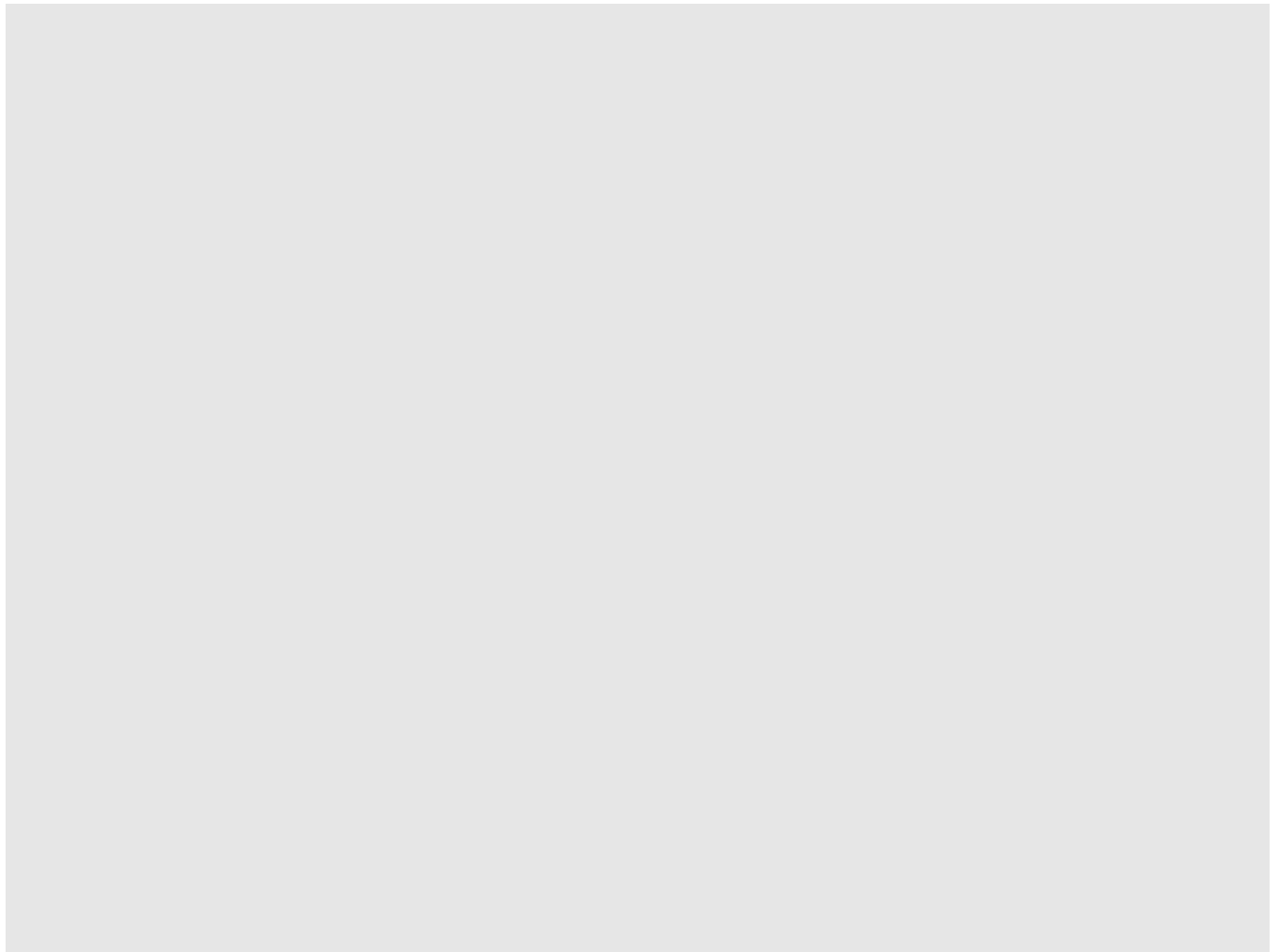
Location: 5606 Russett Road

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, Toki eighth grader Aajiyah Vance meets with Aaron Zimmerman, a representative with the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, during an academic and career planning day at the school last April.

MICHELLE STOCKER, THE CAPITAL TIMES

VAN HISE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Charles R. Van Hise (May 29, 1857 – November 19, 1918) was an American geologist, academic and progressive who served as president of the University of Wisconsin System from 1903 to 1918.

In 1874, Van Hise enrolled at UW-Madison, where he received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1879, and in 1892 he was the first to earn a Ph.D. degree from the university, a doctorate in geology. He joined the UW-Madison faculty as a professor in 1879.

Location: 246 S. Segoe Road

Grades: K-5

Pictured above, students choose fresh vegetables to go with their lunches at the school in June 2015.

AMBER ARNOLD -- State Journal archives

VEL PHILLIPS MEMORIAL HIGH

Who or what named for: From its inception until 2022, the school was named for James Madison (March 16, 1751 – June 28, 1836), an American statesman and Founding Father from Virginia. He served as the fourth President of the United States from 1809 to 1817. He is known as the “Father of the Bill of Rights” for his role in drafting the first 10 amendments to the Constitution during the 1st Congress, which he was elected to as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. On Nov. 22, 2021, the Madison School Board voted to rename the school Vel Phillips Memorial High School after soliciting suggestions to replace the original name since Madison was a slave owner. Phillips was the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Wisconsin Law School, win a seat on the Milwaukee City Council, become a judge in Wisconsin and get elected to statewide office. She died in 2018 at the age of 95. The new name was to take effect for the 2022-23 school year.

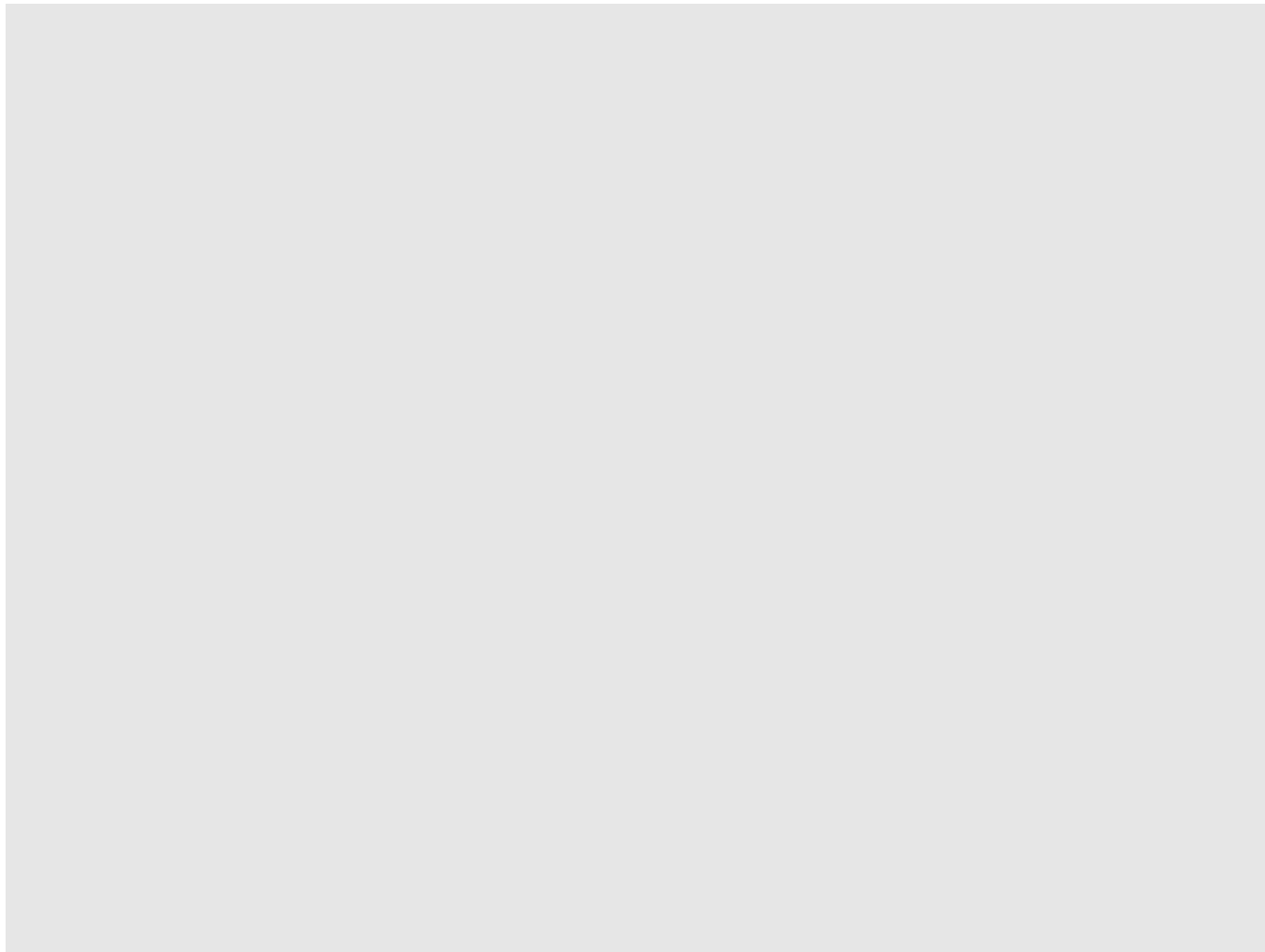
Location: 201 S. Gammon Road

Grades: 9-12

Pictured above, Memorial High School instructor Signe Carney guides an Algebra I class at the school in April.

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

WEST HIGH SCHOOL



Who or what named for: Reference to the school's location in the city.

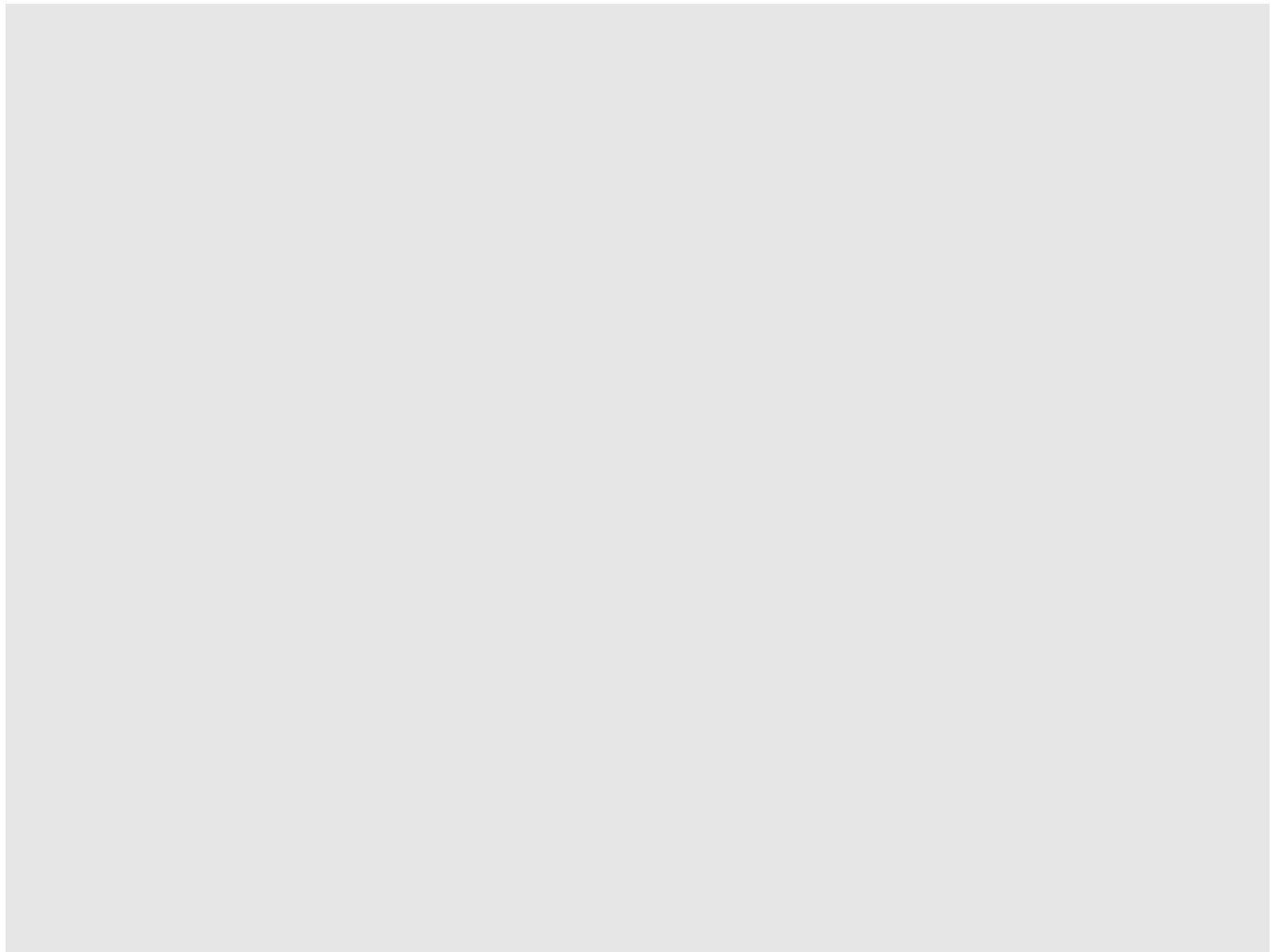
Location: 30 Ash St.

Grades: 9-12

Pictured above, West High School senior Camden Powell, right, and other members of the high school's new drum line practice at the school in February 2017.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

WHITEHORSE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: The former Schenk Middle School was renamed Annie Greencrow Whitehorse Middle School in 1993. According to the school's website, Whitehorse, born in 1906, “exemplified the traditions and culture of the Winnebago people.” She spent much of her adult life in the Madison area and had eight children, many of whom continue to live in the Whitehorse attendance area, the school said. An environmentalist and university lecturer who often joined her grandchildren’s classrooms for educational exercises, Whitehorse provided “critical input” on issues including housing, race relations, and Winnebago culture and language for elected officials.

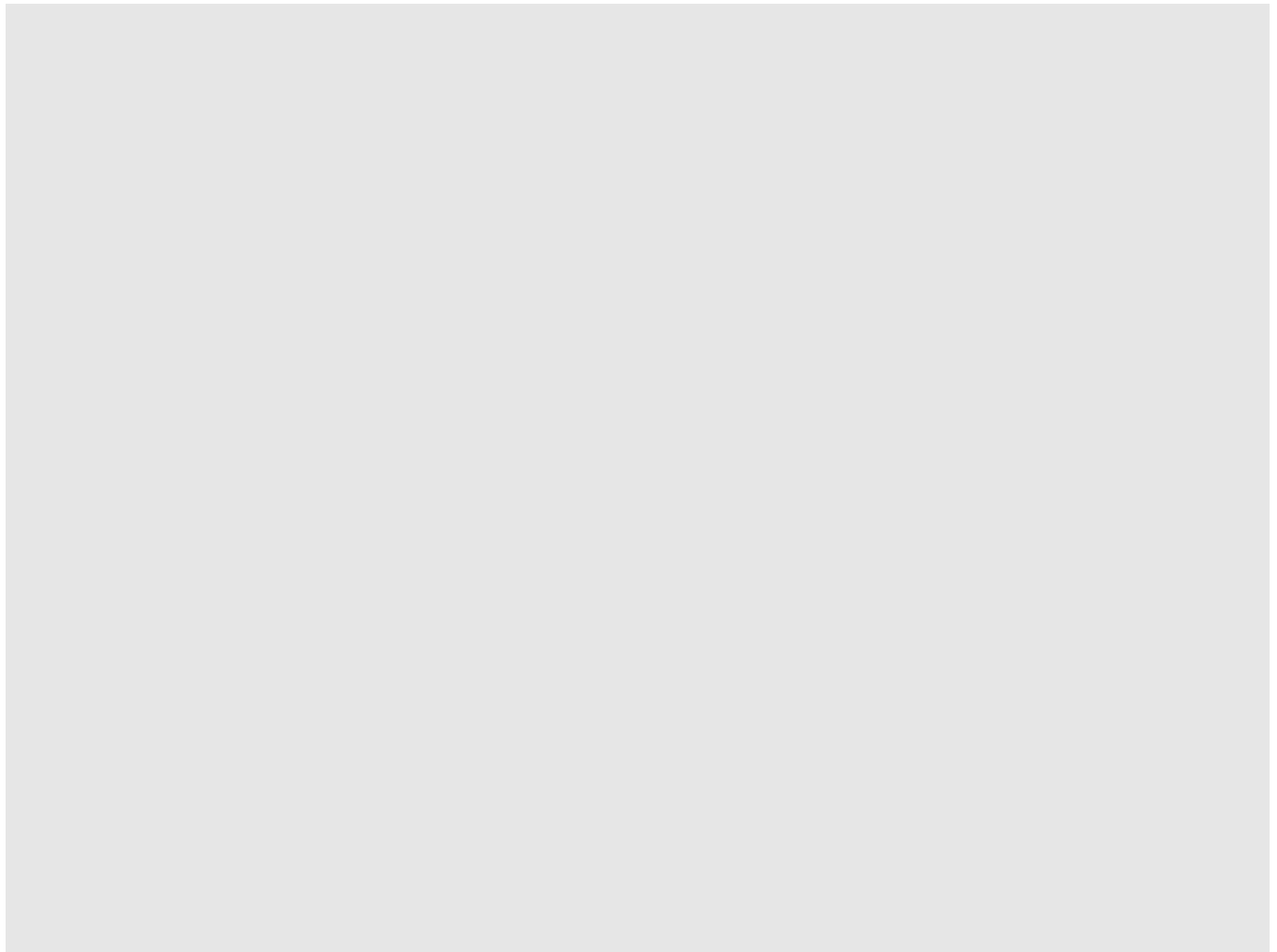
Location: 218 Schenk St.

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, librarian Jennifer Milne-Carroll helps T.K. Valhmu, left, post his music to a website in an after-school program at Whitehorse in November 2014. At right, Warren Sails, 11, also works on creating music.

ANDY MANIS, FOR THE STATE JOURNAL

WRIGHT MIDDLE SCHOOL



Who or what named for: James Coleman Wright, (1926-1995) was a Madison church and civil rights leader. The late Rev. Wright was pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church and served as executive director of the Madison Equal Opportunities Commission. He helped bring about adoption of the city's Equal Opportunities Ordinance, and served as a commission member before leading it.

Wright retired in 1992 after 24 years. During his tenure with the city, he also spearheaded drafting of the city's first affirmative action ordinance, and developed a complaint resolution process for the commission providing a make-whole remedy for victims of discrimination.

Location: 1717 Fish Hatchery Road

Grades: 6-8

Pictured above, (from left) Wright eighth graders Raya Broad, Elise Wang, Alyssa Anderson, Jahsa Ramos and her sister, Jada, who is in sixth grade, sport their new uniforms as they hang out on the playground at Wright during recess after lunch on Sept. 6, 2017.

AMBER ARNOLD, STATE JOURNAL

The zero-tolerance stance on use of racial slurs, implemented last school year by the district's former superintendent, Jennifer Cheatham, makes the use of slurs a one-strike-and-you're-out offense if uttered in front of students.

Rivera

JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

The zero-tolerance stance on use of racial slurs, implemented last school year by the district's former superintendent, Jennifer Cheatham, makes the use of slurs a one-strike-and-you're-out offense if uttered in front of students.



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By Chris Rickert | Wisconsin State Journal

Urban affairs, investigations, consumer help ("SOS")

By Logan Wroge | Wisconsin State Journal

Logan Wroge is a general assignment reporter for the Wisconsin State Journal. He has been with the newspaper since 2015.
